



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

No. 46.

Price, Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S TRAIL OF THE GHOST DANCERS

OR  
THE SIOUX CHIEF'S SECRET



BY  
THE AUTHOR OF  
'BUFFALO BILL'

THE SCOUTS WERE EVEN QUICKER THAN THEIR FOES, AND AT ONCE BEGAN TO SHOOT THEM DOWN.





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## Buffalo Bill's Trail of the Ghost Dancers; OR, THE SIOUX CHIEF'S SECRET.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

### CHAPTER I.

#### BUFFALO BILL'S DEADLY VENTURE.

The famous scout, Buffalo Bill, was the only man that would dare lead the desperate venture, and about the only man who could do so.

His influence, which was great, with the big chiefs gave him the one chance that he might win, when there were ninety-nine chances in the hundred that he would not.

Buffalo Bill took that one chance.

As comrades he selected a very strange lot of men—Yankton Charlie, a scout; Buckskin Jack Russell, an out-and-out borderman; Louis Rameau, a Canadian scout, and Red Tomahawk, a famous chief of the Ogallalas tribe.

Buffalo Bill knew well the men he had selected to aid him in the dangerous work, and they well knew "Big White Chief Bill," as they called the noted scout, who could have gotten from General Miles a couple of troops of soldiers, but knew that strategy and cunning, reckless daring and determination, would count where numbers would not.

The duty was a strange one, for a handsome young woman had gone to the agency to better the conditions of the Indians, when the breaking out of trouble with the hostiles had caused a young and vain chief to kidnap her and carry her to the retreat of his braves in the Bad Lands.

This was the second expedition of the kind Buffalo Bill had started on. A short time previous he had rescued another young lady who had been captured by the Indians. They had intended to hold her as a hostage, but Buffalo Bill had set out after her and met with wonderful success in his adventure. He had met by chance the party of Indians into whose hands she had fallen, and captured her after a brief struggle.

This second kidnaping offered a more serious problem, and Buffalo Bill expected some trouble in solving it.

He had picked his men, and, fitted out with fine mounts, pack animals, a tent and all else needful, they had slipped by night away from the agency and started upon their mission, from which the knowing



ones predicted that even Buffalo Bill would never return.

The selection of the first night's camping-ground had been left to Red Tomahawk and Louis Rameau, and a very wise selection it proved.

The valley alluded to was comparatively little frequented, being well off the trail. In addition to there being an abundance of scrub timber for affording fuel and, marking the approach from either end, there was an irregular chain of frozen or half-frozen pools of rain or snow water—mere cuplike pockets in the rocks that had caught and held it there from time to time during the melting days, while here and there among the rocks and trees were discoverable, in spite of the midwinter season, little patches of succulent green and but partly 'frozen bunch grass and moss, upon which the animals could manage to browse out quite a respectable meal in the course of the night.

There the place was excellently sheltered from the bitterly cold winds that set in with the decline of day.

This fact, together with the large fire, and the one Sibley tent that had been brought along, and could be made to accommodate all hands, barring such as would be on guard duty, tended to make the little camp as snug as could well be desired.

And presently, with the coffee boiling, and some fresh beef, comprised among the packed provisions, broiling on the live coals, the picture of hard-earned comfort, after the toils and dangers of the day, was about as complete as could be expected amid the desolate point of Nature's savagery that framed it.

Louis Rameau was the cook of the occasion, and a very excellent one he made, while Red Tomahawk was assigned the duty of looking after the stock and guarding the camp.

Supper had been duly disposed of, and the last-named warrior had been relieved by Yankton Charley for some little time, when the latter came in from the extreme end of the valley looking to westward, with a mystified look in his rugged face.

"Any o' ye ever see watchfires on the jump over miles of territory, like the will-o'-ther-wisps playin' at hopfrog?" he asked. "Well, 'f ye haven't, ye'd best come 'ith me an' take a squint over ther Bad Lands."

They accordingly went with him through the scrub oaks, and, arriving at the lofty valley's precipitous verge, there was certainly an extraordinary spectacle that suddenly burst upon the astonished gaze.

Beginning miles upon miles, and leagues upon leagues away to the southward, from crag to crag, and from peak to peak, a swiftly-lengthening chain of signal fires was spouting and leaping away to the northward, as if successively, or responsively, kindled by the stroke of a magician's wand.

It was like a gradual and swift outflowing of beaded stars.

In a few minutes the chain had extended curvingly farther away to the northward than the eye could follow it—probably for a matter of thirty odd miles or the entire length of the Bad Lands; a weirdly lurid flame upon the bosom of a region of desolation.

Far off to the northwestward, on a direct line with the trend of the little airily-perched butte valley from which the observation was made, and probably just about in the center of the watchfire, it shone.

This marked the great hostile village, or fortified camp, of Chief Two-Strike and his adherent chiefs crowning the neck of the precipitous, loftily elevated rock-buttressed, and crag-battlemented plateau, in the very heart of the ill-omened tract, and constituting in its way one of the most striking eccentricities of our Western wonder world.

"Blizzard and Blowguns!" shouted Buckskin Jack Russell, who was given to such extravagances in the way of epithets at times, "I've seed Injun telegraphin' by signal fires afore this many an' many a time, but 'f this hyar doesn't take the devil's belt, I hope I may be scalped! What kin it mean? It can't mean they're telegraphin' the news o' Wounded-Knee battle over their land. Thet news is four days old now, an' orter be knowed or guessed by every buck, squaw, ol' man an' papoose of 'em clean 'cross ther Black Hills inter ther Rockies an' Bitter Roots by this time."

The scout, Chief Cody, not answering at once—for he was momentarily buried in thought about the impressive spectacle with folded arms—Yankton Charley sang out:

"What 'f she'd be this hyar expedition o' ourn thet the red cusses is flashin' about in this hyar Fourth-o'-July sorter way? But no," with an uneasy laugh; "such a thing is hardly ter be thort of."

"Then why speak of such an absurdity?" demanded Cody, suddenly rousing himself, and speaking with abrupt sharpness. "Nonsense? Of course it is."

"But how d'ye explain it, anyway, chief?" again demanded Buckskin Jack Russell.

"I don't know—yet," was the gruff reply; and, still with his eyes fixed upon the belt of fires, Buffalo Bill relapsed into his former reverie.

The country of the Bad Lands is a volcanic region, and presents a similar appearance, in many respects, to what a like section in that airless and dead world, the moon, might be imagined to impress the near-at-hand beholder.

On all sides yawn great fissures and zigzag cañons. Peaks of gray-colored earth, or abrupt buttes, or limestone bluffs, of a dirty whitish hue, tower on this hand, broken lines of bold, grinning crags and precipices on that. It is like the spot we read of where "he who enters here leaves hope behind." As one advances into this realm of desolation, the trees be-



come more and more stunted, and the grass, save in secret, uncertain patches, disappears.

Finally, all vegetation ceases. There remains naught but a forbidding, depressing series of peaks, buttes, giant rock obelisks, of deep valleys, of precipice-surrounded, boulder or rock-strewn narrow plains, of horrible pits and of yawning cañons, or gorges, suggestive of a road leading into some desert tract, a fitting hermitage of lost souls, eating their hearts out amid the solitudes of perdition. A more God-forsaken, Heaven-deserted country cannot well be imagined, apart from the icy solitudes of the polar regions. At all events, even without excepting the terrible Death Valley of Southwestern California, a more fitting place for a great Indian massacre cannot be found in the United States.

Occasionally broader valleys afford a stunted growth of bunch grass for ponies, but these comparatively fertile spots are great distances apart and of very limited extent.

It is a splendid country for ambushades and wholesale assassinations—a country of natural blind cañons and little amphitheatres, as it were, with but one entrance, and affording excellent hiding-places for lurking savages.

The camp or village of the hostile savages, under Two-Strike's chief command, was situated in the midst of this wretched region, on a plateau lifting its jagged, and, in the main, perpendicular, sides a hundred feet above the surrounding valleys.

There is only one place where men can scale its sides, and that place, on the southeast corner or neck, is only twenty feet wide at the top and not more than three times as broad at the bottom.

The surrounding peaks tower higher than the little plateau on which nestles the hostile camp. But these peaks and buttes, being perpendicular and terminating, could afford no advantage to troops in an effort to overbrow the enemy.

The road, or shelving-rock layer, leading up into the hostile camp, was broad at the base, but narrowed as one approached the fort, sloping and zig-zagging up at an angle of twenty-five degrees. All other sides of the plateau were perpendicular, and consequently inaccessible.

Add to the foregoing picture of this strangely desolate country that, at the time our scouts were looking over it, under that picturesque illumination afforded by glistening belts of signal fires, it was patched thinly and irregularly over by a spectral masking of snow.

Presently the chain of watchfires began to fade and dwindle.

Then the chief scout, again starting out of his moody reverie, and remembering the question put to him, turned to Red Tomahawk, who had by this time also joined the group, and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"You, Tom," he said, slowly, "are the last one of us out of any permanent visit into that hell on earth. What do you think is the meaning of that extraordinary chain of signal fires?"

"I can guess pretty well, Big Chief Bill," replied the stalwart Indian, promptly. "And so, too, ought both Louis Rameau and Yankton Charley, for that matter.

"It doesn't mean Wounded Knee—a stale story now; and still less does it mean our little descent into the Bad Lands, of which Two-Strike can know little, and would care less, perhaps, even if he were fully informed of it.

"It means war! Those fires are running over the mountains and valleys to summon all discontented Indians to Two-Strike's banner without further delay.

"Some will heed and obey the summons, others will not.

"This is perhaps the first time that the fire chain has been thrown out so brightly and so widely; but it is not the last time.

"But, Big Chief Bill, what is that to us? If we are going down into the Bad Lands betimes, to fight, and intrigue, and circumvent the hostiles, hadn't we better get into camp, set guards for the night, and go to sleep?"

"Ugh! so say I. For, after we shall have gone down into the Bad Lands, perhaps there will come to us the sleep that has no waking."

"So say I, too, old fellow!" cried Buffalo Bill, slapping him on the back. "Come on, my braves!" And he forthwith led the way back to camp, without having expressed an opinion of his own upon the question which Buckskin Jack Russell had so persistently propounded to him.

Perhaps it agreed with Red Tomahawk's, perhaps it did not; but, for all that, he did not express any.

The night passed without disturbance, or even an alarm, and the next morning at daybreak, after a hearty breakfast, Red Tomahawk led the party out into Bad Lands, by a trail well known to him, a little to the north of the place where they had camped.

The weather continued fine and comparatively soft, but with indications of rain or snow.

It was Buffalo Bill's purpose to proceed, leisurely and by as direct a route as possible, straight to the hostile fastness, and there, as a first move, to demand an interview with Two-Strike, both on the strength of their ancient friendship and with a desire to dissuade him from continuing his hostilities against the authorities; thus, if possible, acquiring access to the plateau, as a preliminary to opening secret communication with the captive young lady.

The chiefs, Little Wound, No Neck and Crow Dog, were thought to be still possessed of a sneaking desire to return to the agency, and at the outset Two-Strike had been quite as much disposed toward



conciliation. But when the slaughter of Wounded Knee had intervened, Short Bull, Yellow Hair, Kicking Bear and other influential subchiefs, mutinous from the start, were doubtless by this time vastly intensified in their uncompromising animosity against the whites; and their influence with the turbulent young men of the tribes, always more or less redhot for open and declared hostilities, was very great.

But these intentions on the part of the chief scout were destined to frustration at the very start.

Five miles into the Bad Lands, the expedition was all but successfully ambuscaded by eight Indians, who proved to be stragglers from a large outward-bound, generally raiding expedition, under the command of Yellow Hair, and, in beating off the attack, two of the assailants were unfortunately killed.

## CHAPTER II.

"BY THE FLASH OF THEIR GUNS."

After this catastrophe, the remaining assailants, much to the scout's surprise, came up under an extemporized flag of truce to the latter's defensive position at the mouth of a cañon.

All were recognized as Ogallalas (Red Tomahawk's tribesmen), but recently conspicuous among the avowedly friendly Indians at the agency.

"We recognize you, Big Chief Bill," said their spokesman, with a sternness of air, "and we cannot blame you for the death of our comrades, for it was done in self-defense. We sought to kill you and your party, and it was no more than fair that you should shoot back. But, dearly as we may have loved you personally, that is a thing of the past. You must go back out of the Bad Lands, or you will all be killed and scalped. It is the decree."

As they seemed peaceably disposed, and to have acted more or less under compulsion, or a sense of duty, Buffalo Bill at once went out to them.

"Look here, Eye-in-the-Wind," said he, calling to mind the speaker's name, and addressing him by it, "none can regret this more than we. But we cannot go back out of the Bad Lands—at least, not until I can have a talk with my old friend, Two-Strike—for we are here on an important and friendly errand. Where is Yellow Hair, of whose expedition you are a part? I used to know him very well, and I want to see him now."

"Yellow Hair is on in the advance," replied Eye-in-the-Wind, sullenly, while his companions remained like statues on their ponies, their eyes cast down, their rifles tightly clutched to their breasts.

"Go back, I tell you, or you will be killed. We are all hostiles now. Two-Strike cannot love you any more. Go back."

Then Red Tomahawk, at Cody's request, came and attempted to argue with them. But his mere

appearance in his blue uniform seemed to exasperate them to such a frenzy on the instant that, at a signal from the chief scout, he hastened to place himself out of sight again.

"Who and what is that Red Tomahawk?" cried Eye-in-the-Wind, fiercely, his companions meanwhile dashing here and there on their broncos, flourishing their guns, and giving utterance to wild whoops. "A brave man, truly, who wears warm clothes, while his brethren freeze and starve, and whose late footsteps here were marked with Indian blood."

They at last galloped off in a body, though not before Eye-in-the-Wind had half-promised to convey the scout's request for an interview to Yellow Hair.

"He'll come," observed Buffalo Bill, confidently on returning to his men. "I'm sure of that. Our best gait is to wait here, in the hope of deceiving him as to the real object of our expedition in behalf of the young lady."

But he proved to be both right in his conviction and disappointed in his hope.

Yellow Hair did make his appearance ten minutes later, with a great flourish, accompanied by a dozen or more of his braves who looked particularly ferocious in their war paint, freshly laid on the night before, most likely, and frequently punctuated the brief interview with clamorous whoopings and aimless maneuvers on their half-starved, but mettlesome, ponies.

He was a short, chunkily-built chief, whose hair—of a dirty reddish tinge, instead of black—stuck stiffly upon the top of his head, like a gamecock's comb, and who had been rather pleasantly noted at all the agencies for his fondness for whisky and squaw society.

But almost his first words, after the usual complaints and threatenings, somewhat incoherently blended, dispelled the hope that had been entertained as to preserving intact the real object of the little expedition.

"Bah, Big Chief Bill! what do you take me for?" he roared, as the scout coolly stood among him and his braves, on foot and alone, having even left his rifle in the cañon. "You are on your way to get—if you can—the white maiden away. But you could not, even if we should not kill you and your men in the meantime. Bah!" and this he kept repeating over and over, in his bad English, as if he considered it especially clever, "what do you take me for?"

Stung by disappointment, the master scout was momentarily exasperated out of his accustomed hard-headed coolness and good sense.

He shouted, in a white wrath:

"Two-Strike is a fool to intrust the command of an expedition to such a sutler's jackass as you are now, Yellow Hair, and always have been! Go over to the agency and make peace for twenty-four hours. Perhaps you can persuade General Miles to let you



have your skin full of forty-rod rum at the government's expense. It would only require a barrel or two."

Furious with rage, the chief clapped his rifle muzzle to Buffalo Bill's heart, and cocked the piece, while the majority of his escort wheeled about them on their ponies, brandishing their guns and whooping like maniacs.

The little band in the cañon held their breaths, expecting every instant to see their dauntless leader murdered before their eyes.

But, the first excess of his imprudent anger past, Cody in the midst of his extreme peril remained as cool as a cucumber; a fortunate interposition saved him, and, oddly enough, even his rashness turned out to be an unexpected advantage in the end.

A self-possessed young brave at the enraged Yellow Hair's side struck up the leveled weapon in the nick of time, saying:

"Beware, Yellow Hair! Buffalo Bill has often been the Indians' friend when they sadly needed one, and Two-Strike would not wish him harmed, at least by any other hand than his own. I know it," and, with a few well-chosen words, he speedily calmed the irate chief.

"Look here, Big Chief Bill," and drawing close, he leaned out of the saddle to pat Bill on the breast in a peculiar manner, "you shouldn't have spoken to Yellow Hair as you did, you know. It wasn't right."

"Of course it wasn't," replied the great scout, heartily enough, but also with a significant nod and look for the young peacemaker; "but who among us has control of his temper at all times? I say, Yellow Hair, do you want a pointer from me?"

"What is it, Big Chief Bill?" asked the chief, already mollified greatly, though with the "I-don't-forget" look kindling in his eyes.

"Why do you let your braves gallop and howl around, like those chaps over there, when there is no occasion for any demonstration whatever?" contemptuously indicating a group of the escort thus reprehensibly engaged. "You never see our soldiers making such consummate fools of themselves, do you?"

"No, Big Chief Bill; I have noticed that," replied the chief, looking both interested and surprised. "Why is it?"

"Because they do not waste and exhaust on the idle air the energies and the enthusiasm which should be reserved for the hour of danger and action—the defense, the skirmish, or the battlefield. That is why—in a fair field, and altogether apart from the differences in firearms and equipments—they always whip you, three to one. Farewell, Big Chief Yellow Hair. Do not say that I am ungenerous when I freely make you a present of a war secret such as this."

The chief seemed to thoughtfully consider what

had been said. Then, with simply a loudly grunted "Ugh!" he waved his hand, called out a command, and the entire crew dashed off to the eastward out of sight.

"We thort ye 'bout gone, chief," observed Buckskin Jack, as Buffalo Bill stepped into the cañon, while the other scouts were equally relieved and sympathetic in their looks, if not in expression. "We all thort so."

"So did I," replied the scout, with his odd smile. "Curse that bragging drunkard, Yellow Hair! if I ever catch him begging whisky at one of the sutler's stores again I'll boot him till I'm leg weary. There was some good, however, out of my outbreak, after all, I suspect. You all saw the young brave who tapped me on the breast after knocking up Yellow Hair's rifle."

Yes; they had all seen.

"He was a stranger to me. Any of you recognize him?"

All shook their heads but Red Tomahawk, who, after a moment's reflection, said:

"I do now. He is Arrow-Flight, a young Cheyenne brave from up Rosebud way, and I'm strongly inclined to think, here among the hostiles either partly or wholly against his will."

"I haven't a doubt of it," observed Cody. "At all events, this is what he meant when he tapped me on the chest." And he forthwith produced a small roll of smooth birch bark.

It proved to be a message from Miss Morris, the young woman they were on their way to rescue, was dated that morning, was addressed to "Chief Cody, otherwise Buffalo Bill," and appeared to have been written with the fire-blackened point of a small stick.

It was to the following effect:

DEAR SIR—I learn from a good and unexpected friend that you, with some brave and tried comrades, are hastening to my rescue.

For Heaven's sake, let nothing turn you back! I am a captive, miserably unhappy, whatever may be told you to the contrary notwithstanding.

The reckless young brave who carried me off to this miserable place (here on the fortified plateau, in the heart of this nightmare country, which they call the Bad Lands) will not let me go, and in response to my anger and disdain, which I cannot altogether control, is daily growing more moody and even menacing, until I am greatly terrified.

So, for Heaven's sake, persist in your object to reach or succor me. Oh, my poor aunt! what will she think or dread?

The young brave who promised to place this in your hands, if possible, I am told is honest and faithful. But even he is dubious about being able to reach you with this message.

His name is Arrow Flight, and, could you confer with him, he might be of service to you. But, ah! if this missive should have been written in vain!

BLANCHE MORRIS.

This pathetic missive was read out aloud to all the scouts, who listened to it with much gravity.

"Thunder an' lightnin'!" suddenly burst out Buckskin, with a stream of oaths that would have disgraced a pirate, so intent was he upon concealing the



emotion of his honest heart. "What air we ter do? No need of tryin' ter deceive ther reds any longer ez ter our real object—Yellow Hair's words must hev put all idee o' thet dodge out o' your head. What's our best gait now?"

"What is it, you ask?" exclaimed the Prince of Plainsmen, with the battle-flash in his eye. "It is forward and onward, to cut our way openly and above-board, if necessary, through the swarming hostile hordes to the side of the unhappy, entrapped young lady, who sends out to us this beseeching cry from the depths of her captivity! It is forward and onward; by the gleam of our knives and the flash of our guns!"

One and all, the veteran scouts gathered around him, raising their head-coverings reverently, slapping their arms-belts, grasping their rifles with a tighter clutch, and, in obedience to a raised forefinger on the part of Buckskin Jack Russell, they solemnly repeated, after the manner of an oath, the impressive words of their chief:

"By the gleam of our knives and the flash of our guns! Amen!"

Five minutes later they were once more to horse and on the road.

But it was a bad day for Indians in the Bad Lands, or a good one, as the case might be, when the trails seemed to fairly swarm with them, more or less.

With the central plateau as their aim, glimpses were caught of them almost constantly, going or coming, singly, in pairs, in groups and in bands.

Of course, it was the policy of the adventurers to avoid collisions as much as possible, pending their leader's hope of obtaining the longed-for interview with Two-Strike, which he was still sanguine of bringing to a successful termination, as the best access to the plateau, with his party, but it was not a great while before this was found to be simply impossible.

In spite of the extent of the country, and its varied topography, the Indians were found, in this strip between their fortification and the outer world, so to speak, to be altogether too numerous.

The expeditionists had hardly partaken of their noonday cold bite and rest, after hours of devious windings and dodgings by the most tortuous of trails—they were at the mouth of a little blind cañon, with the accessible end of the plateau dimly discernible in the distance—when Louis Rameau, on look-out on a neighboring point of rocks, came running back to the little camp, waving his hand.

"A big force coming right up this way, from the plateau, through the deep valley below there!" he exclaimed, in his abrupt, broken English, pointing away. "Like enough, sent out on purpose to obstruct us. Short Bull commands 'em. I saw and knew him."

The little cañon opened out directly upon the trail,

which was very narrow at this point, less than twenty feet in breadth, and passing between steep-sided ridges, or buttes, covered with loose stones.

"Short Bull, eh?" he said, reflectively. "The most virulent of the hostile chiefs. Well, this is as good a place to hold him off as any other. At all events, there is to be no retreat. Tumble some of those rocks down into the pass here, my lads, to make a sort of breastwork. The animals can stay where they are in the cañon here till we are ready to move on."

The command was executed in short order. While his companions were evening up the improvised wall thus thrown across the trail, Red Tomahawk ran up to the master-scout, while the latter was busying himself with switching up the loosened pack on the mule.

"Big Chief Bill," he exclaimed, joyfully, "even if they should come on overpoweringly, we needn't take the back track."

"I believe I said that there should be no retreat," was the stern reply.

"Ah!" with a smile; "but if another force—say one of those raiding bands on its way back to the plateau—should come on our rear by this same trail?"

"Humph! Then," with a shrug of the broad shoulders, "I acknowledge we would be in something of a fix."

"But I want to tell you that, even then, we need not retreat, though there would still be a ready escape for us."

"How is that?"

"Don't you recognize this place?"

"No."

"Ah, I forgot that it is not the same trail you made use of before. But look up into the little cañon here. Do you not see the head of a branch trail?"

"Is it a trail?"

"Yes, yes; of my own knowledge."

"Well?"

"It leads indirectly to the fissure-mouth of the secret valley, from which you and your fifty rescued me and my companions once."

"Hallo! this is worth knowing. But you are sure?"

"Yes, yes, Big Chief Bill! And by pursuing it, in an emergency, we would not be retreating, but would be rather going toward the plateau than away from it."

"Splendid idea! But is that not the hoof-beats of the Indians coming up the pass? Let us see."

### CHAPTER III.

#### FRONT AND REAR.

As they joined the three other scouts at the improvised breastwork, the head of the Indian column was just making its appearance, up from the deep



valley to the west, into a broader section of the trail, not more than fifty yards beyond, and where it was joined by another one, coming down over a ridge from the north.

Then the others came in view, until there were seventy or eighty in all, spread across the joining trails and the adjacent low ridge to the south of them, in the rather tumultuous array which is the custom of mounted savages, especially when somewhat taken by surprise.

They had probably been on the point of taking the cross-trail, and this sudden view of the improvised breastwork was their first intimation of the scout's presence.

At sight of it, a shout of mingled anger and derision arose from among them, accompanied by the usual extravagant demonstrations, while Short Bull, their immediate commander, calmly rode up and down their front, apparently exhorting them to patience and forbearance.

This chief, though something of a braggart, was at the same time one of the most vindictive, intellectual, and superstitious, and therefore one of the most dangerous, of the malcontents in the Bad Lands. Two-Strike was his superior in executive ability, and as a born organizer and commander of large bodies of men. Kicking Bear, who had been actively associated with Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-Face in the Custer massacre at the Little Big Horn, was probably his superior in desperate courage. But, in his own way, Short Bull, was altogether a mighty "bad Indian" in both the physical and the intellectual sense.

He was the chief spokesman of the hostile chiefs, in their response to Agency commissioners of three weeks previous, and for mental force and logic his speech to them betrayed a mind of no mean ability. A part of it, according to the report of Louis Shagraux, the scout and chief commissioner, was as follows:

"I have risen to-day, my red brothers, to tell you something of importance. You have heard the words of the promise-makers from the Agency camp, and, if you have done as myself, you have weighed them carefully. If our Great Father at Washington would permit us to continue our religious dance, would give us fair rations, and would quit taking away portions of our reservations, I would be in favor of returning. But even if you say that he will, how can we discern whether you are telling us the truth?

"We have been lied to so many times that we will not believe any word that your Indian agent sends to us. If we return, he will get the brave army men to help him take away our guns and ponies, and likely enough put some of us in jail for stealing cattle and plundering houses; whereas he and his predecessors have been stealing from us steadily for years

—swindling us in our rations, our blankets, and our lands—and no one has ever thought of punishing them. No, no; we prefer to stay here and die, if necessary, to suffering the loss of our manhood and our liberty.

"We are free now, and have plenty of fire-dried beef stored away in the rock pockets of these wild hills and solitudes. And we can dance all the time in obedience to the command of the Great Wakan-tanka. We tell you to return to your agent, and say to him that the Dakota Sioux in the Bad Lands are not going to come in.

"It is better to die here as brave men, and in obedience to the commands of the Good Spirit, than to live like cowards at the Agency, on scanty rations, disarmed, without horses or guns. No, we will not return. If we dance, our Good Spirit will protect us, and when all dancers are sincere the bullets of the soldiers will harmlessly fall to the ground, without power to hurt. There is no army so powerful that it can contend with Wakantanka. Therefore, we are not afraid to remain here, and remain here we shall."

Soon after the Indians had gathered in sight, Buffalo Bill, affecting not to notice the presence of Short Bull—with whom he was, nevertheless, very well acquainted—sprang upon the breastwork, and called out:

"Is Two-Strike among you there? He is, or used to be, my friend, and I want to talk with him. We are not here desiring to fight, but to proceed peaceably for a talk with Two-Strike. Is he there among you?"

There was not a word of reply, in fact, a sudden quiet fell upon the assembled warriors.

Then, wheeling his horse, Short Bull dashed up to within a yard of the master-scout, his painted face a picture of angry scorn and contempt.

"What is all this nonsense, Buffalo Bill?" he exclaimed. "You know that Two-Strike is not among us, even when you pretend to call for him so innocently. But I, Short Bull, am here to answer for him, and you know me. Now, what do you want?"

"I want to see Two-Strike," persisted Cody, coolly.

"You can't and shan't see him!" roared the chief, in a rage. "In fact I am sent here by him to say as much to you, and to turn you back."

"I don't believe it."

The chief made a furious gesture, but then almost instantly kept down his temper, with unusual self-control for an Indian.

"Those are empty words, Buffalo Bill," he managed to reply. "You do believe what I say, while seeking to deceive us with untruths yourself. You do not want, as a first object, to see and talk with Two-Strike. I know of your ancient friendship with him, and of the secret power you are supposed to exercise over him. But all that is nothing. We are



better informed—we chiefs here in the Bad Lands—than you seem to imagine. You are here to seek the release of the young lady who is now with our squaws, and of her own free will and inclination, at that."

"You lie now, Short Bull, and you know it!" thundered the master-scout, once more in a rage at this false declaration, so impudently made.

"Well, we make it out as such," replied Short Bull, with surprising moderation.

Short Bull made a partly deprecating gesture.

"Look here, Big Chief Bill, all this is irrelevant," said he. "Many of us have a respect for you, personally. The same, perhaps, as to your friends yonder behind the stones; with the exception of Red Tomahawk, whom we naturally enough hate as a Blue Indian." (a wearer of the regulation blue.) "But all this, I repeat, is nothing. You must go back out of the Bad Lands, and I am here on authority to tell you so. Will you do it?"

"No; we are headed for the plateau, and we shall keep on."

"Then we shall be compelled to kill you all, though we would be loth to do that—or, at least, Two-Strike would."

"Then Two-Strike can come and tell me so to my face. As for the killing, we can stand a good deal of that, my friends here and myself."

Short Bull was fast losing patience, and, it had to be confessed, with no little reason.

"Look here, Buffalo Bill," he cried, angrily; "you don't surely mean to say that you will dispute the pass here against all my warriors back yonder."

"To the last bullet!" defiantly answered the scout.

Short Bull was about to answer, when a commotion among his band caused him to turn in his saddle and look back.

A mounted brave, on a lofty point of rock to the left of the band, was waving his blanket, probably in signal for some Indians somewhere out of sight, back of the scout's position; while, on the right coming over the low ridge by the cross trail, five or six savages, accompanied by three packmules, were hastening to join the band from the north.

"Scoop in your plunder while you can, Short Bull," said Buffalo Bill, with a sarcastic sneer. "Those are army mules, loaded with fixed ammunition, and you know it as well as I do."

"What of it?" replied Short Bull, without turning his head. "Indians do not despise fixed ammunition when it falls into their hands."

"Or when they can lay their murderous, thieving hands upon it!"

Short Bull suddenly wheeled upon him, his face distorted with passion.

"Are you going back, or not?" he hoarsely demanded.

"No."

"Then your blood be on your own heads!" and, turning his pony's head, the chief rode slowly back toward his men.

But, even in his passion, it was noticed that he pronounced the words reluctantly; such was the importance of Cody in the general Indian estimation or the fear of his continued influence with the great chief Two-Strike, as the case might be.

"Remember, Short Bull!" Bill called after him; "you will have to fire the first shot. We are simply defending our right to the trail here. If there is to be a fight, it will be of your seeking, not ours."

An impatient gesture, without so much as a glance backward, was the only response vouchsafed.

"Bluff is your only game when you're cornered," Bill observed, smiling. "I really hope they will back out, though," with a swift glance that included the little amateur fort, so to speak, and the animals back in the little blind cañon to the right, "if they persist in cutting up ugly, I think we can hold our own. At their first hostile demonstration, I shall risk throwing away a shot at one of those freshly captured mule-packs yonder. A bullet, well put in among those fixed ammunition cases, might cause something of a surprise, at all events."

"We kin hold this hyar fort, at least, fer a spell, chief, you bet!" sang out Buckskin, who, with the others, was snugly bestowed in stooping position behind the barricade.

"Yes, or till we can get away to my secret valley," calmly observed Red Tomahawk.

"Look out!" shouted Yankton Charley. "Queer Injun tactics these hyar, but they're gettin' ready ter fire f'm whar they stand."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, and all hands had just time to crouch low, when, with Short Bull himself taking the initiative, the entire body of hostiles suddenly poured out a murderous and simultaneous volley.

It was a volley that meant business, too, for the bullets fairly hailed against, over, and around the barricade, and Louis Rameau was slightly wounded in the hand by one of them that made its way between the stones.

"Give 'em another chance," commanded Buffalo Bill. "That is, loosen out a few rounds, but be careful to shoot over their heads. I'm for something else."

This was accordingly done, the savages evidently clearly understanding the forbearance that was being shown.

But just as they were obviously preparing for a combined charge upon the barricade, there was a flash and then an explosion in their midst.

One of the newly arrived pack-mules was seen to rise, wreathed with smoke and kicking vigorously, several feet in the air.

Cody's chance-shot had been delivered in the cen-



ter of one of the fixed ammunition cases which constituted its pack, with unexpectedly disastrous effects.

The next instant the entire pack blew up, with a tremendous explosion, in mid-air, leaving nothing of its unfortunate bearer but flying fragments of mule meat, hide, and bones, besides knocking a dozen or more warriors off their horses, and prostrating almost as many of the animals themselves.

"Mule meat's on ther rise!" bawled Buckskin Jack. "But look out, boys! Hyar they come full tilt, ther hull tribe of 'em!"

And so they did, in a thundering, infuriated gallop up the trail, firing as they came, and howling for blood, like so many painted fiends unloosed.

But at the same time the veteran scouts loosened out upon them such a stream of bullets from their trusty magazine rifles as must have made them think that they had crowded up against a leaden torrent from Gatling guns, and worked by electricity at that.

Saddles were emptied by the dozen and in the twinkling of an eye. Several of the savage horsemen succeeded in spurring up to the very edge, and in one case partly over the top of the barricade, but only to fall dead there; and then the entire attacking force reeled and faded back under that leaden hail, like leaves in the path of a withering blast.

"Remember, Short Bull!" shouted Buffalo Bill after the routed braves; "you provoked all this."

"Dog of a white scout!" the chief was heard to yell in response, through the dust and smoke that partly curtained the slaughter-burdened trail; "I'll wipe you all out yet, if it takes the last man under my command. If you don't believe it, look behind you."

Suiting his action to this startling piece of warning, Cody, leaving his men to keep up the firing from the breastwork, ran back up the trail to a point commanding a wide outlook over the country behind and beyond.

One glance was sufficient, and also explained the significance of the blanket signal waved from the point of rock, in the vicinity of Short Bull's command, a short time previous.

Yellow Hair and his entire expedition, on their way back from their early morning raid, were pressing on up a rear valley, and would, unless circumvented, top the pass and be down upon the scout's rear, like an avalanche in less than five minutes.

"Quick, boys!" exclaimed Buffalo Bill, hurrying back to the barricade. "It is about time to give these rascals the slip."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### HOLDING 'EM AT BAY.

The scouts at once dashed into the near-at-hand little blind cañon, where their animals awaited them, already in mounting order.

Before Short Bull and his band could well guess the abandonment of the barricade, the little expedition was at least temporarily safe from pursuit in the secret trail up around the back of the little cañon, and with four or five huge fragments of rock toppled over into the narrow passage behind them.

"We must make haste, though," said Red Tomahawk, who was in the lead as guide of the movement. "Both Short Bull and Yellow Hair, after my recent experience hereabouts, will quickly guess our destination; and there are other, though more roundabout, trails by which they can reach it."

"I begin to remember the lay of the land now," observed the chief of scouts, who was at his elbow, the others following close after, with packmules in their center. "But look here; what if we find the secret valley already in the hands of the enemy?"

"I do not think we shall, Big Chief Bill," replied Red Tomahawk, though with a certain uneasiness in his tone.

"But such a capital 'find' as that valley proved to you!" continued Buffalo Bill, thoughtfully. "The hostiles would hardly have neglected to avail themselves of its grass and shelter, after the last battle there that whipped them away from the mouth of the fissure entrance."

"Still, Big Chief Bill," and the Indian said this with renewed confidence, "you mustn't forget that the gunpowder explosions inside the fissure on that occasion so blocked it up with fallen fragments that it was only with great difficulty you got me and my companions out through it, with our animals. But we shall see."

Fortunately, they at last reached the fissure entrance in question before being intercepted, and, though there were plenty enough signs of the recent battle and mine-springing alluded to, the passage did not seem to have been frequented since then.

To make sure, however, Red Tomahawk was sent on in with the animals, for the purpose of exploring the interior, while the rest of the party made all haste to fortify themselves at its mouth.

This was merely as a preliminary, in case of Short Bull and Yellow Hair showing up there; Buffalo Bill being still full of the hope of having an interview, or some sort of speech, with Two-Strike before the day should pass.

They were still hard at work, and had got the fissure mouth pretty securely blocked up, when Red Tomahawk returned.

He reported a large number of hostile squaws, old and young, with some children, as encamped in one corner of the inner valley.

"All right!" commanded Buffalo Bill, shortly; "they can do us no harm, and perchance some good, should some of the squaws perchance to be friendly, here in the Bad Lands against their will. We



ought to be thankful that the lookout is so good for us."

Just at this juncture the Indians began to put in an appearance before the fissure mouth from either side, Short Bull and his warriors from the west, Yellow Hair and his from the east.

All seemed to be about equally exasperated, but, while cavorting around and giving utterance to savage whoops and gesticulating wildly, seemed, nevertheless, to entertain a very wholesome respect for the fissure and its occupants.

"Hallo, Short Bull!" called out the scout, as that chief and Yellow Hair came in view, side by side, attended by their personal escorts. "Have you had enough of it, or do you want to try it on again?"

"Buffalo Bill, my dear friend!" Short Bull made reply, in a most conciliating voice and manner, "you have always, at least up to this day, been the Indian's friend. Why should we wish to hurt you, or you wish to hurt us?"

"Why, indeed?"

"That affair a while ago was all a mistake," continued he, yet more earnestly. "Come out here, Buffalo Bill, and talk the matter over with Yellow Hair and me."

"Don't imagine that I'm fool enough to come, my beauty," replied the scout, promptly, for he scented treachery in the air; "for I am not."

They both then urged him, but as he continued obdurate to all their honeyed speeches, they presently expressed themselves as greatly grieved at his sudden want of confidence in them, and then abruptly withdrew out of sight.

The next minute over a hundred dismounted warriors rushed into the fissure from either side, in a tremendous combined attack, which they doubtless expected would carry everything before it.

But the scouts were prepared for them. Secure in their position, which was tenfold more impregnable than that but recently contested in the open trail, they opened out such a tremendous fire from their Winchesters that, had the savages been even more overpowering, they could not have withstood it in that narrow passage.

In less than a minute the mouth of the passage was choked and piled up with their dead and dying, while the survivors were glad enough to escape out of range.

Then an Indian appeared, waving a flag of truce, and, as the scouts ceased firing, the two chiefs once more made their appearance, and, to Buffalo Bill's great satisfaction, they were accompanied by the head chief, Two-Strike himself.

"Big Chief Bill!" called out Short Bull; "that was another mistake. That attack was made without either Yellow Hair's authority or mine."

"I've no further words to waste on such a liar as you, Short Bull," responded Cody, looking coolly

out, rifle in hand, over the piled up carcasses of the slain. "Two-Strike, you are here at last, I see?"

"Yes, Buffalo Bill, I am here," shortly replied the big chief of the Bad Lands, who appeared to be both moody and troubled. "What is it that you want with me?"

"Five minutes' private talk on you know what!" promptly. "Pledge me your safe conduct, and I'll come out to you at once."

Two-Strike—a rather fine-looking Indian, with much less of war-paint and feathered bravery than distinguished his fellow-chiefs—seemed to be greatly disturbed.

"I cannot do what you wish, Chief Bill," he replied, after motioning his companions away from him. "In the present state of affairs here, even my pledge of safe conduct would avail nothing. My followers here are literally frenzied. They would murder you on sight. Listen to their howls. It cannot be."

"Then do you come in here to me. You know me a man of my word when I promise you absolute safety in doing so."

"No," moodily, "I shall not come."

"Say at once," sarcastically, "that you are afraid to have the talk with me I desire!"

"Not that, Buffalo Bill! You ought to know that Two-Strike is no coward. Still," stubbornly, "I do not wish to talk with you—at least not now."

"When, then? Give me an appointment to receive me in your village on the plateau, say for to-morrow!"

"No, it must not be. Besides, you must not attempt to enter our village at all, my old friend."

"Why not?"

"At no time would it be safe for you and your friends. You must not come. Look here; we are going to have a great dance. It begins to-night, and will last three days and three nights. You can't imagine the temper of our people during these religious frenzies. No, no; do not make the attempt; I beg of you say no more!"

"I don't care for that, Two-Strike," shouted Buffalo Bill. "I will take my chances as to that, if you will only——"

But here Two-Strike, with a passionate gesture of refusal, abruptly withdrew to one side, and nothing more was seen of him.

"Come, men!" said Buffalo Bill, choking down his disappointment as best he could. "We might as well go into the valley at once. A few of the loose rocks tumbled down from the fissure's walls back in yonder ought to make our retreat reasonably sure against intrusion from without."

This was accordingly done.

The strange secret valley was several acres in extent, and completely surrounded by perpendicular



and apparently inaccessible precipices of prodigious height.

As the scouts entered it from the fissure-opening, which they took care to seal behind them, the colony of squaws, mentioned by Red Tomahawk as having taken up their abode therein, advanced in a body across the turf to meet them.

There were between twenty and thirty in all, without including a dozen or more children, who held back in the collection of tepees which served for the general camp on the farther side of the valley.

They advanced very humbly, their eyes cast down, their blankets drawn tightly around their bodies, and with a general appearance of being greatly terrified.

"Come," said the scout, marching at the head of his companions to meet them. "The poor creatures are evidently half-scared to death. We must relieve them of their fears, treat them as well as we know how, and——" he suddenly broke off, something in the unusual stature of the foremost squaws suddenly arousing his suspicions.

"Beware! beware!" he then called out softly, without turning his head, or withdrawing his eyes from the advancing line of bowed and blanketed forms. "Rifles in readiness, though without letting them perceive it. Possible treachery here. Beware, beware!"

He had hardly given the warning when the ten or dozen taller figures foremost in the squaw-line suddenly threw back their blankets, to the revelation of as many painted warriors, armed to the teeth; and then, with an appalling and exultant whoop, their concealed rifles were raised to their shoulders in an instant.

But Cody's shrewdness had already forestalled the deliberated treachery. The scouts, warned in time, were even quicker than their disguised foes, and at once began to shoot them down, hand-running, before the latter could fire half a dozen shots, and those but wild ones that did no harm.

The thing was sprung, detected, and over and done in less than a minute. Every disguised Indian of them was shot to death by that time, and if a couple of real squaws were likewise numbered among the slain by accident, it was certainly through no fault of the scouts.

Thirteen were killed in all.

The remainder of the unmistakable squaws had fled, shrieking, to their tepees, where they continued to wail and beg for mercy.

But the scouts only troubled themselves further by making sure that there were no more disguised bucks among them; after which they quietly looked after their animals, and proceeded to pitch their own camp under one of the precipices not far away from the tepees; for night was now rapidly coming on, and all were more or less hungry and exhausted after the extraordinary trials and perils of the day.

Half-an-hour later, while supper was cooking, Louis Rameau, who was standing thoughtfully by the fire, after making certain silent observations about the valley on his own account, suddenly said, in his odd, jerky way:

"So, Red Tom, this is your secret valley, is it? Ugh!" with a somewhat contemptuous grunt.

"Yes, Louis," replied the Indian scout. "What fault have you got to find with it?"

"Oh, no fault!" the half-breed shrugged his powerful shoulders. "Ugh! why should there be? Only there're more secrets about this valley than you, or any one else but me, can have any idea of."

"What!" they all cried; "you are then familiar with this place, Louis?"

He only nodded in reply, and seemed to suddenly lapse into one of his moody silences, in which they knew from experience it would be useless to question him further, until he should choose to come out of it of his own accord.

## CHAPTER V.

### STRANGE DISCOVERIES.

While the hunters' meal was under discussion, Louis took up a fresh tin-cupful of well-sweetened coffee, and started away.

"Where are you going, Louis?" asked Buffalo Bill, curiously.

"There is 'little squaw there," replied the half-breed scout, pointing toward the miserable fire at the neighboring squaws' camp. "And I think they have no coffee there. If she is the little Cheyenne squaw I take her for, she may be of much use. She, too, will have been in this secret valley before. Mebbe I bring her back with me."

All this was said in a disjointed way.

Nothing was said, and Louis went over to the tepees. He presently returned, accompanied by the little squaw he had referred to.

She was a very small squaw, not more than seventeen or eighteen, and with a foxily intelligent, but at the same time, sad and honest-appearing little face, of the complexion of a well-seasoned black walnut.

"I was right," said Rameau. "My brethren, this is Chuck-a-popee, whom I have heretofore known." Then, turning to his companion, he said, with the rough manner which Indians and semi-Indians are accustomed to use with women of their own or an inferior race: "Tell them your story. They all understand Sioux, if you can speak in no better tongue."

Chuck-a-popee promptly obeyed, with much meekness, and yet with a manner that argued the possession of a certain force of her own.

"Great White Chief, I talk Sioux, but I am Cheyenne, not Sioux. I came here with my brother from Rosebud ten days ago. Curse the day! He is off



with the warriors constantly, and can't get away. I am here, there, everywhere, with other wretched squaws, ever since. We are half-starved. There is little use for squaws here in the Bad Lands; only for fighting men. Those braves whom you shot came here this morning, on the chance of entrapping you. We could say nothing. Well, they have got their dues. Yes; I have met Louis Rameau before; and I know this strange valley even more than he. There are many secrets here. Come with us; we will show them to you. That is all."

Having thus expressed herself, Chuck-a-popee pounced upon a piece of broiled meat, which was given her, and ate it ravenously, besides drinking another tin of coffee.

"What do you say, Big Chief?" inquired Louis. "The little squaw speaks well, and there is good moonlight. Are you too tired? or will you go with us? There are strange things to know; and now or never is a good word. What do you say?"

"I'm with you, for one," responded Cody, promptly rising. "There is no time like the present."

Red Tomahawk and Buckskin Jack also volunteered, while Yankton Charley, being very tired, thought he had better remain, to replenish the fire, look after the animals and keep an eye on the neighboring tepees.

This was readily agreed upon.

Then the exploring party, as thus constituted, with Rameau and the little squaw in the lead, proceeded to a corner between two precipices, where natural steps were found zigzagging upward along the face of the crags, and began to scale the heights, one closely following the other, by the light of the moon.

It was mighty hard climbing, but still it was practicable, and they pushed on.

"This natural stairway is nothing new to me," observed Red Tomahawk, a little disdainfully, when about half-way up. "I have climbed it before."

"Oh, have you?" grunted Rameau, looking back. "But don't be too top-lofty, Red Tom. There is still something about it you have never seen."

They at last reached a broad shelf in the face of the precipice, where a momentary pause was made.

"Good rock shelf this!" commented Louis, with his accustomed grunt. "May see it again in a different way. Now come on again; path easier now."

Reaching the top of the crag, whose outer was no less precipitous than its inner wall, a magnificent extent of the moon-lighted Bad Lands beyond burst upon their view.

As on the preceding evening, the watchfire display was once more stretching out its curving chain of flame, link by link, while on the fortified plateau, which they could now look down upon, though at a distance of three or four miles, it was obvious that the weird ghost dance, spoken of by Two-Strike, was

already under way, with all the clamor, frenzy, torch-wavings and other savage sights.

"I've looked off before from this crest, too," observed Red Tomahawk, after a long pause. "Oh, yes, it was just here that young Mr. Jackford and I looked off. We saw it all, only it was by daylight, and without any ghost dance."

"Ugh! mebbe you saw, also, something else, which my little squaw here and I are about to show you," growled Louis, with a good-natured sneer. "Red Tom, you know it all, don't you? Chuck-a-popee, you take the lead."

The little squaw obediently stepped across the crest, and, to all appearances, instantly threw herself over the outer precipice.

"All right—no harm!" said Rameau, with a smile at the general start of horror among his companions. "Come on!"

Then, on following him, they perceived that Chuck-a-popee had simply jumped down to a shelf, or ledge, whence, hard in against the face of the perpendicular wall, a narrow path, cut or naturally worn in the rock, but with its top concealed by thick-twined vines until she had brushed them aside, wound and zigzagged its tortuous way downward.

They followed her lead down the path, being now solely lighted by the reflection of the watch-fire belt.

Arrived at another and broader shelf, their guide did not follow the path any further down, but, pulling away some more vines, disclosed a cave entrance into the face of the crag.

"Also familiar to you, Red Tom?" queried Louis. "Ugh! Saw all this before, of course?"

"No, nor even suspected it, Louis," was the good-humored response. "You and your little friend here take the—what is it?—the cake, the belt, the cheese, or whatever there is."

"Ugh! don't we though? But there is still more. Lead on, Chuck-a-popee."

Entering the cavern, which, by the faint glimmer of moonlight at its farther end, was seen to pierce entirely through the cliff, they proceeded about midway, where an extraordinary surprise awaited them. They were at the opening of a side-cave or cave-chamber, which was lighted by several pine-knot torches, stuck here and there in the walls, and in the center of which, a tall, gaunt, spectral-looking man was busily engaged in making a painstaking and most remarkable toilet.

A piece of looking-glass fixed against the rock, a basin of water on a three-legged stool, a small paint brush in his hand, and what appeared to be little pots of grease and paint disposed on a little shelf below the glass, together with several pieces of savage ornamentation, other than those which he had already assumed in part, were his only aids.

An old rifle leaned on another corner of the cave, and there was a bed of skins and some rude articles



of furniture, indicating the cave as the strange abode of its yet stranger occupant.

The latter did not perceive the intruders at first, but when he did, their presence did not seem to disturb him in the least.

"Hullo! it is my little friend, Chuck-a-popee!" he exclaimed, in Sioux, turning a queer face toward them—the face of a white man, truly, but daubed over in the most extraordinary manner with grease, chalk and paint, so that it resembled the face of a walking corpse more than anything else. "What! got some friends with you, too? Never mind; the more the merrier, so long as they don't trouble me." Here he came to a staring pause, at the end of which he rushed forward, shouting in the best of English, "Why, Buffalo Bill, my old friend! how are you? Good Lord! who'd have expected to see you here?" And, grasping the scout's two hands, he shook them vigorously.

Cody's astonishment, now that he recognized the strange recluse, in his turn, was no less pronounced.

"If it isn't Job Potter himself, may I miss my next Christmas dinner!" he exclaimed, responding heartily to the greeting offered him. "But let me ask you your own question first, old fellow. What's the meaning of this ridiculous masquerading? And what on earth are you doing here?"

"I'm an Indian Messiah," responded the recluse, with a grin through his chalk and paint.

"Are you in earnest?"

"In dead earnest, Bill, though I confess to be growing daily more and more tired of my job. See?" he threw open a sort of sheet that was loosely thrown around him, and displayed a tight-fitting, white-bleached buckskin hunting shirt, on which were depicted, in black marking, the ribs of a skeleton, in startling keeping with the ghastly death's-head patch-work of his face and neck. "I'm fixed for business, as you perceive."

"Hullo!" exclaimed Cody. "Are you booked for the ghost-dancing that is beginning over yonder on the plateau to-night?"

"Sure! Shall start for the big village in half-an-hour. In fact, a pony and escort will be waiting for me half-a-mile from the outside foot of the precipice. I'm a big gun among the hostiles, these days, I can tell you; though it would never do to let them into the secret of my queer abiding-place up here in the crag, as a matter of course. Only this little squaw discovered that by the merest accident a short time since, and she has not betrayed my secret to any of 'em. You see, I first set the time for the dancing, issue my general instructions, and then hop in on the crazy fools sort of unexpected and mysterious-like, in this peculiar war-paint of mine. But why do you ask?"

"I'll tell you presently, old man," replied Bill, re-

flectively. "But it suddenly strikes me you may be of great service to me."

"You have only to command my services to have them. Do you think I can have forgotten the service you once did me? Not much, old friend. Job Potter may be a holy fraud now, and may have been a good deal of a gambling rascal and dead beat all his life, but he has never yet forgotten to return service for service, if the opportunity offered."

Chief Cody thanked him, and then introduced his followers, besides giving the hermit an idea of his expedition into the Bad Lands; after which Potter related the various causes that had brought him into the unusual situation in which they found him.

In brief, the story was this: From having been a frontier gambler and hard character generally, Potter had several years since "reformed" so far as to give up his evil practices, to become a semi-religious crank and itinerant preacher on his own account. He frankly confessed to a rank hypocrisy in doing so, and that he had made it pay until hard luck had latterly stranded him in the Bad Lands; when—at first with the simple object of relieving himself of the perils menacing him on the part of the hostiles, into whose clutches he had fallen, and subsequently through a liking for the growing influence over them which he thus obtained—he had gone into the Messiah craze to the extent of his abilities, and thus far with unbounded success. Potter swore, however, that, to the extent of his power, he had, covertly, at least, sought to use superstitious agency toward influencing the hostile chiefs to return to the agency, but thus far, of course, without success.

At all events, Buffalo Bill finally resolved to make use of him, and the man promised that on the following night, when the ghost-dancing mania was likely to be at its culminating point he would hit on a plan of introducing him and his party into the hostile camp, without bloodshed, which he hadn't a doubt would be successful.

After some further discussion as to the proposed plan, the party took their leave of the highly eccentric Job Potter, and passed on through the cliff.

They came out upon the inner precipice ledge, where they had once before paused in their ascent to the crest, and whence they speedily made their descent to the secret valley below.

Of course, Rameau and the little squaw might have led the party direct from the inner wall to the cavern of the hermit, without taking the trouble to surmount the summit; but then such a simple course would have given no opportunity to Louis for displaying the superiority of his knowledge over that of Red Tomahawk; and, moreover, the secret of the outside descent was worth knowing in itself.

They found Yankton Charley sitting apart from the campfire in the shadow of the rock, his cocked rifle across his knees, his watchful gaze fixed alter-



nately on the fissure entrance into the valley, and upon the neighboring tepees, where the squaws could be heard keeping up an excited chattering, diversified now and then by a dolorous wail or death-chant.

"What's up, Yankton?" demanded the leader. "Anything happened?"

"Nothin' pertickler, chief," was the answer. "Only a lot er them murderous squaws hev been interviewin' me often enough, in ther thort you uns hed kerried off ther little 'un yonder, prob'ly to do her some harm. An' then they've been makin' a big howl over ther disguised bucks we killed, an' whose bodies they've kerried inter ther tepees yonder. You kin hear 'em yelpin' even now."

"No harm in all that," observed Buffalo Bill, cheerfully. "The little squaw's contented now as when she helped Louis guide us up the cliff. And if the old ones in the tepees will rid us of the trouble of putting the dead bucks under ground, so much the better for us."

Chuck-a-popee was accordingly sent back to her squaw associates, with a goodly supply of spare provisions from the expedition's stock, such as could not but be vastly welcome, and, the Sibley tent having been erected betimes, guard duty was arranged for the night, after which the scouts sought their well-earned repose.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HOSTILE CAMP ON THE PLATEAU.

The night passed without incident.

The following day, which it had been decided to spend quietly in the valley, pending the hoped-for success of the ensuing night, as promised by Job Potter, was only interrupted by a messenger from Two-Strike, who, unable to penetrate the obstructions which had been piled up therein, made his presence known on the other side of them by repeatedly discharging his gun.

"What is it?" demanded Cody, hastening into the fissure with his men, and speaking over and through the barricade to the messenger, whose figure could be made out distinctly in the cavernlike dimness beyond.

"I am here with word to Big White Chief Bill from Two-Strike," was the reply, in very respectful Sioux.

"What word does Two-Strike send me?"

"He once more begs you to give up your present purpose, and go back out of the Bad Lands. If you will only do this, he sacredly pledges himself to give you the personal interview you so much desire."

"When and where?"

"Within a week, and at Pine Ridge Agency. He is tired of the hostilities. He will by that time re-

turn to the agency, with all his people, and sue for peace on the sole condition that the past shall be forgiven, and the Indians be allowed to keep their guns and horses."

Buffalo Bill smiled. He was perfectly convinced that nothing could be further from the wily old head chief's intention than such a speedy and summary surrender as was here proposed, and yet Two-Strike's anxiety to keep him and his men back from an attempt to push forward to the plateau was, in itself, sufficiently encouraging. Still, it was necessary to dissemble.

"Tell Two-Strike that I will think the matter over seriously," he called back, in response. "Of course, his proposition fills me with joy, for the good of the country, and I only hope that he will do what he promises. Still, I will have to deliberate so far as it concerns me personally and the chief object of my expedition. You can say to Two-Strike from me, however, that my friends and I are very well content to rest where we are for the present."

The messenger seemed about retiring, when he suddenly broke out, not in Sioux, but in broken English, mixed with Cheyenne:

"Big White Chief!" he cried, a sudden anxiety in his tones, "I beg you to tell me something on my own account. Are there not some squaws encamped in the valley there?"

At the same moment Buffalo Bill recognized the man's voice.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed; "so you are the Cheyenne brave, Arrow-Flight, who saved me from Yellow Hair's treacherous wrath yesterday."

"Yes, yes," eagerly.

"Well, there are squaws in the valley here. What would you know about them?"

"Oh! I only want to know if my sister is still with them. She is a very little squaw, and her name is Chuck-a-popee."

"What! Chuck-a-popee is your little sister, then? Be of good heart, Arrow-Flight. We are grateful to her. She has done us a very great service, and we shall take good care of her."

Arrow-Flight seemed to be overjoyed at what he heard.

"May the Great Spirit bless you, Big White Chief Bill!" he cried. "Ah, I know your word is truthful, that you will do what you say. But the little Chuck-a-popee is very, very dear to me. Oh, if I only had her with me back on the plateau, I would soon devise some means of escaping with her back to Rosebud, far away from this horrible region. I would long since have run away, but for the miserable thought of leaving her behind, to starve or be killed."

"Arrow-Flight, can I trust in you?" inquired the chief of scouts, after a moment's reflection.

"While I live, White Chief."



"Then try to be among the hostile guards of the entrance up into their village to-night, between eight and ten, and give no alarm as to what you may see or suspect."

"I can do better than that for you, White Chief Bill. I can get even to command the sentinels of the pass, and that I will do. I swear it."

"A thousand thanks, Arrow-Flight! And perhaps even the little Chuck-a-popee will be with us then."

"Ah, White Chief Bill!" with a joyful exclamation; "I would die to serve you in and out of the hostile camp. But you will see. Farewell!"

"Adieu!"

"Better and better!" commented Cody, on accompanying his men back across the valley to camp. "Chuck-a-popee was our first godsend, Job Potter, the bogus Indian Messiah, our next—though I heartily wish he might be in some better line of humbugging, and perhaps this young brave, Arrow-Flight, will prove our third."

"I think he will, chief," said Red Tomahawk, confidently. "Arrow-Flight is reputed at Rosebud as being both faithful and brave."

"Nothin' like hevin' a friend in an enemy's camp," observed Buckskin Jack, while both Yankton and Louis nodded. "It's better'n a square drink when you're feelin' shaky after makin' a night of it 'ith too much of ther oh-be-joyful."

That afternoon Buffalo Bill, guided up the cliff solely by the little Chuck-a-popee, had another interview with the odd hermit of the lofty mid-crag cave, during which the details for the coming night's adventure were thoroughly discussed and agreed on.

Promptly, as night closed in, everything was got in readiness in the valley.

Red Tomahawk, though not a little against his inclinations, was to be left behind to keep an eye on the tepees and the animals; for it had been decided to proceed in the wake of the false Messiah on foot; and the known hatred for the Red Tomahawk by the majority of the hostiles was such as to be deemed best that he should not endeavor to enter the fortified camp with the others.

When ready for the start, the remaining four scouts presented a pronounced transformation.

Buffalo Bill and Buckskin Jack, wearing Indian blankets over their rifles, and their long hair tucked up under their hats, in which sundry eagle feathers had been stuck, looked a pretty fair counterfeit of a couple of hostile braves in the semi-civilized winter toggery that was so common among the latter when attainable, and a liberal application of war-paint streakings had not been forgotten to give an added air of redskin to their disguise.

Louis Rameau was rigged up in a squaw's costume which Buckskin had obtained.

But the most astonishing transformation of all was

that of Yankton Charley, who was got up in the ghost-dancing dress. Indeed, painted, chalked up, and thus attired, he looked almost as ghastly and terrifying as Job Potter himself at his professional best, so to speak; only, in addition, no one could have suspected him of being other than a full-blooded Indian on religious excitement bent, when he had once thrown aside his blanket and executed an impromptu dance, with appropriate yells and gesticulations, by the campfire, in the way of rehearsal.

"You'll do, Yank, if you don't over do it," observed the chief, as the last preparations were being made. "You must be careful on that point. Otherwise, it must be confessed, you look wild enough and hideous enough to take the cake from the boss prancers in the spiritual ring."

"You're not so purty yourself as ordinary, chief," replied Yankton Charlie. "But I'll do my doggone level best ter keep up ther reppertation of ther gang, you kin depend on that."

The fact of the sham dancer and bogus squaw retaining their rifles was not a little in contradiction to the characters they were assuming, it was true; but, everything considered, it had been deemed best to risk it.

The little squaw, Chuck-a-popee, took no small part in these preparations, and her delight and pride in knowing that she was to accompany the masqueraders were unbounded.

"I will guide you!" she cried; "I know the way to the plateau so well that I could find it in among the intervening valleys in the dark. And then will not my brave brother be there to help you, too?"

The other squaws from the adjoining tepees—most of them hideously old, and doubtless with their sympathies wholly with the hostiles—together with the children, were grouped at a short distance from the fire, regarding with stupid curiosity the proceedings, which they evidently did not understand.

Finally, everything was in readiness, and the difficult route up the face of the cliff was begun.

The sham "Messiah" was putting the finishing touches upon his own extraordinary toilet when the disguised scouts reached the entrance of his cavern chamber, in which, in addition to the illuminating pine knots, he had kindled a brisk fire, for the weather had again turned off very cold and raw.

"Aha!" said he, critically surveying the party; "this is something like, and I haven't a doubt you will pass muster. I have been turning things over in my mind, Mr. Cody, and think now it will be best for you and your party to follow close upon my heels. It will seem as if I had picked you up while you were on your way from some other ghost-dance outside of the Bad Lands, and I will so make it understood as we pass on up the side of the plateau."

"All right, Potter," was the response. "We are ready as soon as you are."



Fortunately, it was another moonlight night, and the belt of signal fires also contributed not a little of its reflected light as the party made their way down the other precipice, with the dancing-master, as one might say, of Potter, and the little squaw, Chuck-a-popee, in the lead.

The first named carried no arms, but was provided with a long, stout wand, decorated with little buckskin ribbons and strings of beads.

"It's my divining wand, or my official staff, whichever you please," he had explained to his companions, with his semi-reckless, semi-cynical smile. "Not much good in a regular fight, perhaps, but answering my holy purpose well enough in an emergency, as you may have the chance of observing sooner or later."

A light snow began to fall as they quitted the foot of the precipice, and a cold wind blew across the desolate and chaotic wastes from the northwest; but they were enabled to make pretty rapid progress along the trail that was presently struck.

Arriving at an elevated but sheltered point, they came upon four mounted Indians in waiting, with a spare pony, whose saddle and other gear were especially fine.

The "Messiah" at once pranced toward them, with a lively movement, at the same time giving utterance to some gibberish-like incantation in the Sioux dialect; the escort meanwhile receiving him with many manifestations of superstitious respect and fear.

However, when the holy man had sprung into the saddle, one of them, with a half-suspicious frown, ventured to ask:

"You are not alone, as has been your custom. Who and what are these strangers that we see with you to-night?"

"Leave it to your betters to ask such questions, unbeliever!" roared out Potter, fetching him a whack over the shoulders with his staff. "What! am I to give an account of myself and my pilgrim followers to such as you? Here, you——!" calling one of the others by name; "gallop on ahead, and advise the chiefs of my coming, along with these worshipers from the dance ring on the Porcupine River. And let them see to it that the dance is well under way and everything in readiness for my sacred ceremonies by the time we arrive."

The messenger selected at once spurred away in obedience to the command, while the grumbler hung his head under the reproof, his two companions even going so far as to kiss the sacred staff that was still being flourished menacingly over their humbled heads.

Then all proceeded sedately in the direction of the plateau, the disguised scouts and their little squaw guide finding no difficulty in keeping up with the cavalcade on foot.

At last, a final deep valley being traversed, they

came out suddenly upon a wide, open plain, at whose farther extremity rose the towering sides of the naturally battlemented plateau, its lower end glistening with the gleam of many campfires, the guarded zig-zag path leading up to the village being, moreover, studded on either side with flaring torches, showing the sentinels guarding it at intervals.

Besides, there was a tremendous hubbub going on. The guards were yelling out their wild fanatical chant, the rude music of the ghost dance itself came floating down on the cold wind, and the flashing torches of the spectators around the ghostring could be seen moving tumultuously hither and thither up over the ragged crest of the elevation.

"Follow on at a run!" the fakir called back over his shoulder. "We must signalize our arrival with a great demonstration. The more you yell and jump about the better, only be sure to yell religiously and in good Sioux. You can do the jumping about in any language you durned please."

This was the "reformed" Mr. Job Potter's parting little joke.

Then he put his pony to a slow gallop, riding in advance of his escort, while shouting out and gesticulating like a madman; his pedestrian followers acting up to his unique instructions with a zeal and exuberance worthy of a better cause.

"To think that even superstitious Indians can be taken in by such outrageous mummary!" thought the master scout, and doubtless more than one of his companions, while this triumphant entry was in progress. "Good Lord! it would be a disgrace to the intelligence of as many South Sea Islanders."

But it answered the purpose just the same, which was the only thing to be considered.

Arrived at the foot of the blazing stairlike causeway, the procession made a momentary halt, while the guards began to open a passage for it up the path, shouting and singing, even the rocks far above and far along the plateau-verge being crowded with expectant Indians, vociferating their greetings, or giving utterance to meaningless howls, while furiously waving their torches.

"It's a go!" called back the fakir to his friends, in English. "The danged fools bite like so many fish. This ovation is for your arrival, no less than mine. Only keep up the jig, my pilgrims!"

Then they all went yelling and dancing and gesticulating up the steep like so many madmen.

In fact the ruse was working so successfully, and everything was going on so swimmingly that Buffalo Bill could scarcely realize the good fortune before it was an accomplished fact.

Arrow-Flight, in command of the main guard, which was posted half-way up the path, recognized him and his companions immediately, and, in running out to grasp his sister by the arm and draw her to his side, he found occasion to whisper:



"Bravely done, White Chief! I shall be off duty here very soon, and if you should want me, I shall be at the ghosting, watching for a signal."

Then the plateau was reached, Two-Strike and his head chiefs joined with the mob of hostiles in shouting out their greetings; and, springing from his bronco's back, Job Potter led the way direct for the ghost ring, whirling his staff above his head, and bawling out his incantations at the top of his voice.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GHOST DANCE.

The ring was in the very center of the hostile village, which was of most unusual extent, being composed of several hundred tepees, all brilliantly lighted by numerous rousing campfires, blazing here and there at frequent intervals.

Two young chiefs were already dancing for the benefit of a huge mob of savages standing eight or ten deep around the sacred circle.

Half-naked, their faces and bodies smeared with paint, chalk and charcoal marks, they were hopping about like human grasshoppers, and occasionally giving utterance to loud whoops, while the crowd shouted or screamed in sympathy, and a particularly wild-looking trio of old medicine men, throned on a sort of rude staging at one side, furnished the brass band accompaniment for the extraordinary ceremonies.

That is, these last were banging and pounding, as if their lives depended on it, one on a regular Indian drum, another on an old hotel gong, and another on a dilapidated copper kettle, with a rusty pair of firetongs, occasionally diversifying the hideous clamor of their discordance by shrieking out: "Wakantanka is here! Lo, his spirit is upon us! See; it enters into the bodies of the dancers, and their souls are on fire! Hurrah for Wakantanka! Here, too, is his Messiah, one of his special messengers, once more among us! Keep it up, brothers! Glory to the Great Spirit! He is about to sweep away the despoiling whites, the buffalo will return, and the land will be once more solely for us, the red men, his chosen people. Jump and dance, dance and jump! Our day is at hand!"

In fury and craziness, and apart from the musical attempts, the scene, for sheer incoherence, was altogether beyond description.

But the wildest efforts of the fanatical dancers paled their fires when Job Potter, the boss fakir, bounded into the magic circle with a series of kangaroo-like leaps, idiotic gesticulations and demoniac howls, that altogether, so to speak, knocked the crankish spots out of anything that could have preceded it.

Yankton Charley, in his ghost-toggery, and Louis

Rameau, in his fighting squaw's dress, followed, twirling their guns over their heads, snapping their fingers, screeching like factory steam whistles, and jumping about, and even over one another, like a brace of lunatics at leap-frog.

At all events, it was the dramatic success of the Bad Lands for that evening, away beyond any extravagance that had yet gone before it in the ghost circus of the hostile fastness, and the spectators fairly howled themselves hoarse in approval.

However, Buffalo Bill, who had subsided at the least thickly crowded side of the ring, was not altogether satisfied.

"Our men are overdoing the thing," he managed to say, in a low voice, to Buckskin Jack, who was silently grinning and chuckling at his elbow. "Look at Yankton, especially. Even the most ridiculous of the genuine dancers can never indulge in such stupendous monkey-shines. He is acting like an electrified bullfrog. And then no really spiritualized squaw in the world could ever get off those steam-engine screeches that Louis so frequently indulges in, even apart from his brandishing his Winchester in that idiotic manner. Why can't they take pattern from Potter, in whose madness there is a certain method, at all events? I feel strongly tempted to run over there, and boot them both out of the ring!"

"That'd be wuss yet," counseled Buckskin. "Let 'em jump. It's better'n a bull fight." And he seemed to keep from exploding with no little difficulty.

But at this juncture Short Bull, No Neck and Kicking Bear strode past, and the former was heard to say: "Queer sort of dancers, these newcomers, anyway! Their rifles are Winchesters—of the newest pattern, too, and, then, who ever heard of a squaw with a Winchester before? I never did."

"You heard that?" demanded Cody of his companion, when the group had passed on.

"Yes," was the reply, serious enough now. "What's ther remedy, colonel?"

"There is little Chuck-a-popee watching us from the other side. Louis should join her at once in locating the tepee wherein Miss Morris is imprisoned. Yankton can go later, and then seek his opportunity of informing me, when the dancers shall have become so numerous that our absence will not be noted. Prance over the line and manage some way to give them the tip. In the meantime, I must find some means of having my coveted talk with Two-Strike alone."

"Good enough, Bill!" And, with a bound, a yell and a gorillalike twirl of his rifle over his head, shillelah-fashion, he went over the line among the dancers, who, seized by the contagion one by one, by this time numbered eighteen or twenty in all.

Cody was presently relieved by seeing Louis quit the ring and join Chuck-a-popee, apparently with-



out exciting suspicious observation, after which the pair disappeared together.

A moment later there was a friendly touch on his arm, and he saw the young Cheyenne, Arrow-Flight, at his side.

"Big White Chief Bill, the half-breed is off with my little sister, you doubtless know whither," whispered the young man. "I can guide you after them to Big Knife's distant squaw tepee at any moment. See; the excitement is so fierce and confused that no one will notice. Shall we go?"

"Not yet, Arrow-Flight," was the reply. "I must be somewhat sure of the lay of the land behind me first, and would therefore have my interview with Two-Strike at once and alone, if possible. Do you see anything of him?"

"I did a few minutes ago. Wait! He was with those three chiefs over yonder. You see them?"

"Yes, Kicking Bear, Little Wound and Elk-Killer; you mean those?"

"Yes; and wherever Elk-Killer is Two-Strike is not far away. He ought to be called Following-Dog, instead of Elk-Killer, for no one ever heard of his killing any elk, and he is so much at Two-Strike's heels that everybody laughs at him. Ah, there is Two-Strike himself now! You see him?"

"Yes."

The old head chief had, in fact, just made his appearance among the others. He wore his accustomed stern, meditative, and half-troubled look; and, indeed, it was generally thought that he was too intelligent to really share the Messiah superstition with the rest, looking upon it secretly as the pernicious and absurd humbug that it really was.

"Arrow-Flight," continued Buffalo Bill, hurriedly, "couldn't you manage to get Two-Strike to go to his tepee alone for some ten minutes?"

"Yes, White Chief Bill; it shall somehow be managed."

"Wait! Which is his tepee?"

"You note the two tepees, one larger than the other, standing off together there, close to the deep and narrow ravine, far to the right?"

"Yes."

"The larger is his, the smaller for his squaws; for the old man mostly prefers to dwell alone. I will signal you from the other side, so!" making a peculiar gesture, "when I shall have got him alone in his lodge. But you must be on the lookout for Elk-Killer."

"All right. But wait yet a moment. Big Knife! have you seen him hereabouts?"

"No; Big Knife seldom or never comes. I don't believe he really cares any more for the ghost-dancing than does Two-Strike himself. Besides, when night comes he is too busy with looking after his fair prisoner, with his other squaws in the distant tepee. His cousins, Hump-Dog, Run-Loose and

Little Thunder, with several others, assist him in his watch, and they are always on the alert."

"Go on, then, Arrow-Flight; I shall eagerly await your signal."

Arrow-Flight backed away, in order to skirt around behind the backs of the spectators of the dance, and presently Buffalo Bill had the satisfaction of seeing him speak to Two-Strike and take him away.

Yankton Charley and Buckskin Jack were still mingling with the dancers, who were every moment growing more numerous and more excited, the apparently tireless boss fakir (it seemed a sacrilege to dignify him with the title of "Messiah," even in derision), still leading the insane rout with loud-voiced invocations and the most extravagant of antics.

Elk-Killer had also disappeared almost as soon as Two-Strike, but the scout had taken no notice of this.

In a short time, the latter caught the anxiously-expected signal from Arrow-Flight, and, pushing his way back through the crowd with as careless an air as he could assume, hurried around the ring to meet him.

"Two-Strike is alone in his tepee now," said the young Cheyenne. "I persuaded him that he was not looking well, and ought to lie down. Hurry up, though; for there is no telling how long he will remain there."

"I go at once. In the meantime, do you try to get my two friends, Buckskin and Yankton, out of the ring, and then meet me at the corner of the ravine where the two tepees are standing. Will you do this?"

"Sure, White Chief Bill!"

They accordingly separated.

The two tepees in question were well out from the thick of the village, and the ravine, or gulch, to whose ragged edge their backs were presented, was less a ravine than a chasm, long, narrow, apparently very deep, and cutting the plateau almost in two from the north, in a zigzag direction reaching, in a broader and shallower form, almost into the center of the camp.

As the scout hurried along its edge, after getting out from the glare of the campfires and the more closely-built lodges, there was scarcely a sign of life in the immediate vicinity, though both tepees showed lights in their interiors, and, as he paused to listen, there was a murmur, apparently of female voices, from the smaller habitation.

Then he strode directly to the entrance of the larger tepee, pushed aside the loose-hanging buffalo-hide flap, and entered with a stern and frowning air, coolly standing his rifle up in a convenient corner as he did so.

For warmth, a small fire of scrub-wood was burning and smoking in the center, thus affording the only illumination there was, and the old chief was re-



clining, with half-closed eyes, on a heap of skins on the farther side of it.

He at once looked up, however, on hearing the intruding footstep, and then, not recognizing the intruder, he gave an exclamation, and made a spring for his rifle.

But, before he could reach it, the great plainsman's iron grip was on his wrist, and his stern, menacing voice was in his ear.

"Peace, vain old man!" hissed the voice; "would you struggle against Fate itself? It is I, Buffalo Bill, and we meet at last, in spite of your cowardly evasions, as I promised you that we should. So; what do you make of it, now?"

What was there in that low-hissed voice, that grim, uncompromising aspect, that seemed to strike the veteran, wily old chief with sudden and nameless fear?

At first he seemed wholly bewildered, but, as he recognized his visitor, he managed to gather himself together a bit.

"I know you now, Buffalo Bill," he growled, sulkily. "I will not harm you, nor raise any alarm."

"Right well I know that," returned Cody, casting him from him with a contemptuous laugh. "For, old scoundrel that you are, it is because you dare not!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TWO-STRIKE'S SECRET.

"Dare not?" echoed the old chief, with a sudden start, and yet with something of a proud disdain, for, if more cunning than valiant in his old age, he had been brave and hardy in his warrior youth. "White Chief Bill, you ought to know me to be no coward."

"A long-treasured secret of conscious crime can make a coward of any man," replied the master scout. "Sit down there and let me talk to you," indicating the couch of skins, and Two-Strike sullenly obeyed. "You have your black secret of the past—a secret which, if known, could hang you!—and your knowledge that it is known to me alone, of all men other than yourself, places you in my power. Do you hear, chief?—in my power!"

The old Indian cowered under the burning and accusing gaze that accompanied the words.

"Yes, yes, I know, Buffalo Bill," he muttered feebly. "But since then we have been good friends, and you promised never to betray me."

"On one condition—a condition that you would never make or instigate a war upon the whites—and that you have broken!"

"Listen. Years ago, when on a lonely hunting expedition, and with the firewater demon in your brain, you foully murdered in cold blood three men, while they slept beside a trail-side spring in the heart

of the Black Hills wilderness. Your object was the gold which they carried on their persons. I was the sole witness of the crime, though from a distance, and when it was too late to interfere.

"I covered you with my revolver, all red-handed, and then held you my prisoner while you slept off your drunkenness. Then, when you awoke to a realization of your crime, and besought me on your bended knees to keep your secret, I promised to do so, on the condition I have named, and with what motives?"

"In the first place, I recognized—which you did not—your victims as murderers themselves, criminals of the deepest dye, of whom the world was well rid, escaped convicts from a distant prison, their very gold, which you had stained your soul to obtain in turn, the proceeds of a brutal robbery, involving murder, in another Territory. In the next place, I thought that, by keeping your secret on the condition I imposed, I might be instrumental of an immense benefit to both the white settlers and your own people by preserving the peace ever thereafter between them, and at the same time without robbing justice of any great amount of her just dues by abstaining from declaring the means by which those miscreants had come to their ends at your miscreant hands!"

Two-Strike, who had been growing more and more moved, gave a great groan, and looked up, his withered and wrinkled cheeks quivering with emotion.

"No, no; not that, Buffalo Bill!" he faltered, raising his hands, half-supplicatingly.

The master scout was secretly touched, but he went on remorselessly:

"Hear me through. Though your victims were so criminal and worthless, at least one of them had rich and influential Eastern friends. These moved heaven and earth, offering great rewards for the delivery of the slayer to justice. Still, I maintained the silence I had pledged.

"Even now, though, and you must know and feel it, the sword of justice yet hangs over you, dangling by a single thread. And even were you to come into the agency, with your crack-brained, superstition-ridden people here, and be forgiven this wholesale crime of yours against the government, you know that you are still in my power, that a single word from me could send you to the gallows for that old, long-secret crime."

The scout purposely exaggerated his case here, for the crime of which he spoke had long been forgotten, and it was more than doubtful if the old chief would have been called to account for it under any circumstances. But Two-Strike could know nothing of this, and it was only fair that his fears should thus be played upon in the interest of a thoroughly good and honorable cause.



"But listen, chief," continued Cody. "You are still anxious, notwithstanding the pledge you have broken and the deceitful, shuffling manner in which you have avoided and deceived me—you are still anxious, I presume, that I should keep this secret of yours."

"Great God, yes!" cried Two-Strike, springing to his feet with an earnestness that was unmistakable. "Oh, my friend, I will say anything, do anything!"

"I want deeds, not words. Save in the nature of an oath that you will not dare to break," sternly. "Hark you, then; I want you to promise me two things on an oath that I myself will administer to you. Will you do it?"

"If in my power, yes. What do you demand?"

"First, and foremost, a renewal of your promise to come into the agency and sue for peace just as soon as you can arrange these elements under your control so as to enable you to do so with success. I recognize and appreciate the difficulties that you must master in order to accomplish this result, and am willing to make allowances for them. Will you promise this?"

"Yes," slowly. "I am really tired of this miserable business. Yes, Buffalo Bill, I will swear to perform this task to the best of my ability. What is the other thing?"

"You know my special business here. Why have you permitted Big Knife to detain that young lady here in the camps?"

The old chief moved uneasily in the seat on the couch, which he had resumed.

"White Chief Bill, you do not, or will not understand," he said, earnestly. "The young men, the hot heads, are more and more in control here. In minor affairs, such as this, my rule is but nominal. Big Knife and his cousins have great influence with this disturbing element in our camp. Direct interference on my part in this young lady's favor (she is not being badly treated, by the way, apart from being kept in restraint) might bring half the best fighting material I have in open antagonism with me. However, what is it you want me to do? I will do the very best I can to meet your wishes, though I tell you frankly that my best will not be a great deal."

Cody could not but feel the force and earnestness of what the old chief said, and he was, moreover, loth to exact of him more than he could be able to perform.

"How far back from the village," he asked, "is the tepee where Big Knife and his personal adherents stand guard over the young lady?"

"About one mile."

"Anything else there besides the one tepee?"

"Oh, yes, the corral where Big Knife keeps his ponies, and a sort of lodge adjoining it where he and his friends mostly sleep. The rest of his followers are here in camp."

"Two-Strike, I ask this of you: That in exactly one hour from this time, as near as you can guess, you induce your howling dervish—or your Messiah, as you call him—to lead the ghostdance out of the ghosting, well on through the village, past the guarded path leading down to the plain, and well on to the extreme southern point of the plateau. This will give my friends and me the chance we require."

"I know what you mean," said Two-Strike, after a pause. "Yes, I will do as you wish. But I warn you that I cannot be responsible for such of our young men as remain behind the dancers."

"I will take my chances as to that. And will you also promise to have three lighted torches tossed successively high up in the air from the top of this ravine here, as a signal that the dance is being conducted as I demand."

"Yes, I promise that, too."

Buffalo Bill then administered the oath to him, and at its conclusion Two-Strike grasped his hand.

"You will still keep my secret?" the latter inquired, eagerly.

"I swear to do it, Two-Strike, on the conditions I have imposed."

"You will find me faithful, Buffalo Bill," was the response. "Leave me now, I am no longer a young man, and must rest a little."

This closed the extraordinary interview, and, with another grasp of the old chief's hand, the master scout picked up his rifle, and, fairly satisfied with the result, silently quitted the tepee.

A moment later, while skirting the grim edge of the chasm, there was a half-hissing, half-guttural exclamation in his ear, and he wheeled to find himself suddenly confronted by a stalwart warrior, his up-lifted tomahawk in one hand, his hunting-knife in the other.

Buffalo Bill had been warned against Elk-Killer, and here was the intermeddling chief murderously confronting him at last, cunning and ferocity about equally striving for the mastery in his savage face.

"Hallo!" said the scout, in the most genial tone in the world; "it's you, is it, Elk-Killer? What's the matter with you?"

"You speak good Sioux, Buffalo Bill," was the grim reply. "I listened close. Two-Strike's black secret is now mine, no less than yours."

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yes; and after I have killed you, he will be in my power. White Chief Bill!" with a flourish of the hatchet; "*I am for you!*"

"Wait just a second, Elk-Killer. Are you such a coward that you dare not attempt my death without these chiefs to help you?"

"What chiefs do you mean?"

"Short Bull and Crow-Dog, who are even now behind you."

Elk-Killer twisted around his head, with a sort of



surprise, and at the same instant Buffalo Bill sprang at his throat, like a wolf of the woods, dodged under the hatchet arm, and, whipping out his hunting-knife, while dropping his gun, drove it, hilt-deep, into the treacherous Indian's heart.

In less than a minute after Elk-Killer had announced his murderous intention, he was tumbled, a dead man, into the abyss.

Hastening on, Buffalo Bill was so fortunate as to find Buckskin Jack, Yankton Charley and Arrow-Flight awaiting him at the head of the ravine, according to his appointment with the latter.

"Come!" said he, "I think I have made our rear comparatively secure, but no time is to be lost. Let us follow in the footsteps of Louis and the little squaw."

They succeeded in passing back through the village without attracting attention, and, ten or fifteen minutes later, under Arrow-Flight's guidance, came in sight of the lonely tepee and its adjacent corral, by the dim light of the moon through a light-falling veil of snow.

No watch or campfire lent its cheerful light to the desolate loneliness of the scene.

The village campfires were but dimly seen far behind; the curving signal fires had long since faded out from over the black face of the ill-omened land.

Still, there was a light observable in the tepee, and a fainter one in the sort of shed that adjoined the corral, and in the latter the ponies could be heard stamping their miserable food, or moving about unsafely.

They made their approaches with the utmost caution, for there was no telling how many fellow-guards Big Knife might have with him besides his three cousins; and it was also desirable, if not indispensable, that the rescue should be effected, if possible, without firing a shot, however much blood it might be necessary to otherwise shed.

At last there was a low and familiar whistle, in imitation of a night hawk's call, and Louis Rameau approached them from a hiding-place, almost on a line between the tepee and the corral.

"Good," he whispered, with his habitual grunt. "Glad you are come, but there are many of them."

"How many?" inquired Buffalo Bill.

"Nine."

"Well, that's better than nine hundred. Where are they?"

"Three there, including Big Knife himself," pointing to the tepee. "Making their rounds outside. No more in there," indicating the low shed, or lodge. "Playing cards, those. Ugh!"

"Where is Chuck-a-popee?"

Louis pointed to the shed again.

"What is she doing there?"

"Making merry with the six chiefs, while she doctored their rifles on the sly."

"How about the other rifles at the tepee yonder?"

"I doctored them myself. They were leaned against a rock while Big Knife and his two cousins talked. Still, it wasn't easy. Ugh!"

As he finished speaking, a shadowy, slight figure was seen stealing crouchingly toward them, and with a sort of halting movement.

"Ah, there is Chuck-a-popee!" said Buffalo Bill.

But it was nothing of the sort.

They were standing in a little nook, formed by a half-circle of tall rocks.

As the crouching figure came among them into this place, and straightened up, the scouts perceived, to their no small astonishment, that it was a veiled young squaw whom they had seen with Big Knife before their entrance into the Bad Lands.

"I said that we might meet again unexpectedly, White Chief Bill," said a low and musical voice. "See!"

She snatched away her veil, revealing herself as Big Knife's sister, Malk-wah-kee, the little, lame medicine woman of the tribe.

"What?" was all that Cody could say, while shaking her hand with great heartiness. "Then it was you, whom we saw the other evening then, and you were then first making your way into this God-forsaken region?"

"Yes," she gravely answered; "I felt it my duty to look after the welfare of the young lady who is my brother's prisoner. I have been with her constantly since then. It was through me that she was enabled to send you the birch-bark missive by means of our good friend, Arrow-Flight here. She is quite well, and impatient for your rescuing approach. I can help you, I think, and I wish to do so on one condition."

"That your brother's life shall be spared, if possible, I suppose?"

"That is it. These others with him are criminals; their hands already deeply dyed with innocent blood in times past. Big Knife has, in his abduction, been mainly misled by his vanity."

"It is an agreement, Malk-wah-kee," said Buffalo Bill, gently, for there was a suggestion of silent suffering in the young woman's voice that both puzzled and pained him. "A bloody fight is doubtless indispensable, but Big Knife's life shall be spared, unless he should throw it away by his own madness. You all hear this?" and he turned to his followers, who silently nodded.

"Oh, thank you, White Chief Bill!" exclaimed Malk-wah-kee. "I must go back to my charge now."

She seized his hand, and was gone through the light-falling snow.

"Good leetle squaw, thet, chief," observed Buckskin Jack, eying the master scout, with a peculiar



look. "An' she's got a secret thet you orter guess, 'r else I'm a fool."

"A secret!" echoed Cody, mystified. "What secret?"

"Oh, nothin' pertickler, 'f you can't understand 'thout bein' told. But look! yonder comes the other leetle squaw, Chuck-a-popee, f'm ther direction o' ther corral."

## CHAPTER IX.

### TO THE RESCUE.

Chuck-a-popee put in a smiling appearance, nodding proudly to Buffalo Bill and his scouts, while grasping her brother's extended hand.

"The six warriors, they still play white man's cards in lodge," she said, simply. "But their guns won't go off in a hurry. It is all done."

It was necessary to make a division of the attacking force, small as it was; for it would never do that a single guardian should escape to give warning at the village.

Louis Rameau, Yankton Charley and Arrow-Flight were accordingly dispatched to look after the men in the lodge, while Buffalo Bill and Buckskin Jack took it upon themselves to take care of Big Knife and his two friends at the tepee.

"Remember!" was Cody's final command, as the separation took place; "no firing, under any circumstances, if it can possibly be avoided."

As for little Chuck-a-popee, she sort of faded off to one side through the falling snow, but there was little doubt that she would haunt the trio of which her brother was a member.

The tepee was erected on the north side of the plateau, but far from its precipitous and rock-bristling edge, where a few scrub trees likewise found a precarious footing.

Cody and Buckskin approached it with the utmost caution.

Big Knife and his companions were presently seen conversing near the entrance, the former being easily distinguished by his superior size and bearing.

The scouts waited until the trio had sauntered to the opposite side of the tepee.

Then, running noiselessly forward, Buffalo Bill dodged behind a friendly rock, where he set down his rifle, while Buckskin remained unconcealed, and gave utterance to a cough.

The sentries came bounding in sight in an instant.

"A spy!" exclaimed Hump-Dog, the foremost, instantly leveling his gun and snapping it, but without result, while his companions were equally unfortunate. "A white man, at that, and——"

Buckskin was a holy terror in a close fight. He had dropped his gun and launched out, like a pan-

ther, the words being summarily cut short by his hunting-knife being plunged into their utterer's throat.

Buffalo Bill had darted out, staggering the next comer, Run-Loose, by a tremendous left-handed fist blow in the mouth, while trying at the same time to trip up Big Knife by a swift wrestling feint with his foot.

But Big Knife, who was a noted athlete among his fellow-braves, was not to be caught in that way, and he also recognized his antagonist on the instant.

"What, White Chief Bill?" he roared. "Ah, that accursed sister of mine has played me false." And, grinding his teeth, he cast aside his useless gun, after snapping it again and again in vain, and rushed like an avalanche upon his foe, knife in hand.

But the Indian doesn't live who can successfully tackle the Prince of Plainsmen in a hand-to-hand encounter.

Cody promptly closed with him on the verge of the precipice, still mindful, however, of his promise to Malk-wah-kee.

There was a terrific grapple for the mastery, and then the great scout, avoiding more than once a vicious stroke from his antagonist's knife, got the upper hand, and knocked him clean out and down over the rocks by a blow behind the ear.

Doubting not that the tumble had broken his adversary's back or neck, but having no time to regret it for the little lame medicine woman's sake, Cody turned to perceive Buckskin and Run-Loose rolling over and over on the snow in a regular wildcat death grapple.

He quickly relieved his friend by snatching up the warrior's tomahawk, and splitting open its owner's skull with it, while Buckskin got on his feet, out of breath, but unhurt.

Then, as there were indications of a desperate fight going on in the vicinity of the corral lodge, both snatched up their guns, and dashed off in that direction.

Two hostiles were dead on the ground when they got there; but then so was Arrow-Flight, or apparently so, with his little sister wailing upon his prostrate form; while Louis and Yankton were back to back, and holding off the remaining four by the skir of their teeth, the latter dancing around the pair with brandished gun, knife and tomahawk.

Buckskin at once knifed one assailant in the back while Cody jumped for the most formidable-looking of the remaining three, who proved to be the last of Big Knife's cousins, Little Thunder, a particularly wiry and murderous redskin tough.



The latter hurled his knife, though without effect, and then, with a whoop, went in on his sand and muscle, with uplifted tomahawk.

Bill countered his rush, however, with a tremendous jab in the side with his gun, and, as he doubled up and buried his hatchet in the snow with a howl of pain, let him have the knife in the side of the neck, so that he instantly toppled over, a dead man.

Turning to see how his companions might be faring, the chief scout was just in time to see the last of the six receiving his quietus by a tomahawk stroke at the hands of Yankton Charley, and the victory was complete.

"Any one of our side hurt?" demanded Buffalo Bill.

No, not seriously, though Louis Rameau had been pretty well pounded about the head with the stock of a broken gun before polishing off his last man, while the brave Cheyenne, Arrow-Flight, was still motionless on the ground, with Chuck-a-popee on his breast, though there was no longer a wail or sob from her.

"Poor little squaw!" exclaimed the master scout, stooping to raise the girl; "she must have fainted, and—Good God!" he glanced but once at her side, where a great knife was sticking after having pierced her through and through; "she is dead! The poor thing caught that knife which Little Thunder launched at me before I laid him out. And Arrow-Flight, too; see?" laying down one body to turn over the other; "altogether done for, with his head completely smashed in. Brother and sister, alike faithful and true to us, and dead almost at the same moment. Sad, sad, sad!"

It was as he said.

Louis Rameau paused over the dead body of the murdered girl, his dark face momentarily working, his Indian-like stolidity for an instant shaken by the distressing spectacle.

"A good little girl, Chuck-a-popee!" he said. Ugh! Knew her since she was papoose. Had she lived, I would have married her. But the living are living, and the dead are dead. Ugh!" And he turned away.

Probably everybody has his individual way of mourning, no less than of love-making; this was the half-breed Louis Rameau's way. But who shall say that might not have been profounder than appeared on the surface?

At this juncture there was a series of screams from the tepee, and the scouts rushed in a body in that direction.

Buffalo Bill was the first to enter, though a sudden outrush of several shrieking squaws almost upset him as he did so.

Then Miss Morris, exclaiming: "Save her! save her! Oh, for God's sake!" fell, half-fainting into his arms, and a terrible spectacle presented itself.

Big Knife, having in some way escaped serious harm in his tumble over the crag, was in the center of the abandoned tepee, a look of revengeful fury in his face, a bloody knife in his hand, his sister, Malk-wah-kee, hanging, wounded to the death, over his left arm.

"So perish all traitresses!" howled the murderer. "I may lose my white love, but not without my revenge upon the false sister whose treachery lost her to me."

Flinging aside the knife and dropping his piteous burden, he snapped a pistol at Cody's head, dashed through the side of the tepee, and disappeared.

"Follow him—hunt him down—shoot him dead!" shouted Buffalo Bill, as his followers came hurrying in. "Promises to the contrary are wiped out now." And, shifting his fainting burden to Buckskin Jack's support, he hurried to where the wounded little lame medicine woman had already struggled to her knees, and was stretching out her arms toward him.

"White Chief Bill!" she whispered, with a smile as he raised her in his strong embrace; "I can tell you now—I am not ashamed now."

"Tell me now!" he exclaimed, his stern voice trembling in spite of himself. "Do not talk thus, my poor girl! What do you mean?"

"Speak low, and bend a little closer—there!" The faint whisper was growing still fainter. "White Chief Bill!"

"Yes?"

"You remember that there was one thing on earth I wished for, more than to be a healer among the whites, a doctor—one thing more than anything else?"

"Yes, yes!"

"You don't even now guess what it was?"

"I don't know. Well, what was it, then?" desperately.

"Your love!" the last smile brightening even as it



faded and fluttered away. "Oh, I love you so dearly, so dearly!"

He could make no answer.

"White Chief Bill!" he could hardly hear the whisper now.

"Yes, yes!" with a sort of groan, his great heart was so full of pity for her.

And then, with a slight movement, she was suddenly limp, a dead weight, lifeless and cold.

Poor Malk-wah-kee! But then she had her own little romance, after all, and it was not without its sympathy and tenderness.

Laying the body gently upon a couch of skins, Buffalo Bill was at once his stern, energetic self again, the man of action and resource.

"Quick! to the corral!" he exclaimed, rushing past Miss Morris, who was by this time sufficiently recovered to be on her feet, most of his men having already rushed out in pursuit of Big Knife. "Courage, and come on! This is no place for you!"

When he got outside, Louis Rameau, lariat in hand, was already in the corral, selecting animals for the flight.

Buckskin and Yankton, still hesitating to fire against orders, were drawing a bead on the fugitive Big Knife, who was fleeing toward the village on foot.

"If we might only just wing him!" they cried. "Otherwise, he'll get ter ther camp before us, an' give the alarm, in any case."

"It must not be!" exclaimed Cody. "Wait!" he snatched from the ground a bow and quiver, probably dropped there by one of the panic-stricken squaws. "This is worth the trial!"

The quiver contained a single arrow, which he promptly notched to the string, and, drawing it to the head, let fly after the fugitive, by this time half-hidden by the falling snow, having the satisfaction of seeing him stagger and stoop, apparently putting his hand to the calf of his leg, after which he disappeared.

"Ha! we shall doubtless beat him to the village, at all events. Here, you, Buckskin, drive back those squalling women into the tepee! Yankton, help Louis in the corral. There ought to be plenty of saddles and bridles in yonder corral lodge, too. I will look to that myself."

These things were executed with the utmost dispatch, though it was longer than the scout could

have wished when the five requisite bronchos were finally brought out, with such gear as the place provided, which was only better than nothing for white men, though an Indian would have found little fault with either one of the equipments.

"Young lady, no time to be lost, and you perceive the extent of our accommodations. Can you ride man-fashion?"

The words were hurriedly addressed by Buffalo Bill to Miss Morris, as they stood together beside the best sheepskin saddled pony of the appropriated group.

"I—I have never done such a thing."

"Pardon me, ma'am, but the beginning must be made. Your hand, if you please, and now—your foot."

It was done in an instant, and the young lady had to confess to herself that she was more comfortable in the saddle seat than she could have had any idea of.

Then her rescuers swung themselves upon their mounts, and all were off at a gallop, leaving their dead, friend and foe alike, to the mercy of the pitiless wintry waste behind them.

The distance to the fortified village was about half accomplished when three flaring torches were seen to fly up in the air, one after the other.

"The signal!" exclaimed Cody. "We are safe!"

But not wholly so.

True, as they dashed through a part of the camp in the direction of the pass, a few minutes later, the ghost ring was wholly deserted, and Boss Fakir Potter, howling and gesticulating, was leading his dancers and the mob of attendant spectators far out and beyond.

But at the same time Big Knife, bareback on a picked-up pony, came plunging in among the tepees from an unexpected direction, whooping out the alarm at the top of his voice.

## CHAPTER X.

### OUT AND AWAY, BUT AGAIN AT BAY.

"Straight for the top of the descent, remember that!" coolly commanded Buffalo Bill. "Never mind that calf's bawling."

At the same time both he and Buckskin hazarded a snapshot at the unlooked-for disturber of the peace, but with no more result than to bring his horse to



the ground, while he still kept up the alarm, and to some purpose at that.

The top of the pass was reached, indeed, but not before a hundred or more infuriated young bucks, with Short Bull and Kicking Bear at their head, came rushing back to the tepees for their guns, while at least a dozen guards had remained true to their posts at different intervals down the zigzag precipitous descent. "Take the young lady down the slope, all of you!" called out the scout, in his clear, cool voice. "I will hold the head of the pass here unaided until you shall have fought your way to the bottom!"

Hold the head of the pass against that demon multitude, and alone!

However, they obeyed, without a protest—Miss Morris had looked in simple astonishment, altogether too great for utterance—and a moment later, without turning his head, he heard them thundering a breakneck gallop down the zigzag descent, exchanging a dozen shots for one with the sentinels as they rode.

Then the Indian mob came surging toward the lone defender of the pass in a mad wave, some with guns, others without, yelling like fiends, the glare of the campfires about the ghost ring lighting up their savage, passion-distorted features with a demoniac glow. Some shots were also discharged at him on the instant, but he seemed to bear a charmed life against them.

Then, all of a sudden, he opened out upon them with his Winchester. Buffalo Bill at bay, and with his magazine gun in good working order! Could more be said with regard to the operation and result?

In five minutes, or less, they ran away under the stream of balls with which he swept their ranks.

He sought in vain for Big Knife as a special target, but, after kicking up the rumpus, that villain had either taken care to keep out of sight, or was lost in the general crowd.

As for the more prominent chiefs, such as Short Bull and Kicking Bear, the scout, in view of Two-Strike's important promise to him, had no desire to increase the danger of the situation by bringing down one of them.

Having driven back the mob of hostiles (the ghost dance, by the way, was being kept up, further on toward the end of the plateau, in all its vigor), he turned and looked down the steep.

The scouts, with the young lady in their charge, appeared to have reached the bottom and the plains, without suffering material damage, though Louis Rameau's left arm seemed to be hanging at his side in an unnatural manner, as if he might have been winged; while behind them, on the various stages of the descent, were eight or ten of the guards motionless or writhing upon the ground, their comrades, of about the same number, dancing about them and howling for revenge.

Buffalo Bill paused but a moment. Then, waving his hand to his party on the plain, he gave rein to his pony, and dashed down the steep, loosening out a stream of bullets right and left from his faithful Winchester as he flew.

It was like the passage of a meteor, or the chute, or a lava torrent down a volcano's side.

He reached the bottom unscathed, but only to have his broncho fall dead beneath him, pierced by numerous balls.

However, five or six ponies, whose saddles he had emptied in his downward flight, were already clattering after him down the steep; so that to lariat one of these and mount it was but the work of a moment, after which he coolly galloped out over the plain to rejoin his friends.

"Oh, sir! we feared you were lost to us!" exclaimed Miss Morris, her heart in her throat.

"Ah, my dear miss!" responded the scout, gayly, "I am perhaps too big not to be found again without the public bellman's assistance."

Then they all started in a hard gallop across the plain.

The scouts lost no time in getting under way with their own original outfit, and, with their happy charge among them, were speedily leaving the ill-omened secret valley far behind them, and making tracks out of the Bad Lands as fast as their well-recuperated animals could carry them.

Soon after, the head chiefs, with their people, came in and surrendered, and the ghost dancers' war in the Bad Lands was at an end.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 47) will contain "Buffalo Bill's Deadliest Deal; or, The Doomed Desperadoes of Satan's Mine." Satan's Mine, the worst den of outlaws in the whole West. Read how Buffalo Bill cleared it out.





Get in line for another bunch of thrilling stories. Last week has been an unusually good one even in this record-breaking contest.

We have an immense pile of stories on hand from Buffalo Bill boys all over the United States and Canada. There isn't a state or town scarcely on the whole continent that isn't represented.

And the representatives, judging by the stories, are all boys to be proud of.

Are there any yet who have failed to enter the contest?

If you are one don't let this grand chance to win a splendid prize get past you. Read the directions on page 30. Take one look at the list of prizes, and then—well, I won't tell you to pitch in at once, for you'll do that without telling.

Here are a few of the very best that have come in lately.

### Over a Cliff.

(By Bert Ward, Mass.)

It was the 15th of July, 1900. The day dawned hot and sultry, and my friends and I thought that there was never a better day before it.

We had been on a hunting expedition in the Whithall range of mountains for small game.

At eight o'clock we broke camp and moved onward in a westerly direction. We were intending to stop at Saddle Creek on the following night.

At noon, leaving the wagon which we had with the rest of the boys, three in number, Nick Nelson and I started out to hunt for game.

Over crags, across chasms, through riverlets, up the steep sides of cliffs, we climbed, now together, now apart, until we got tired and discouraged, but no game crowned our efforts.

At last we separated, Nick going south and I aimed for Bass Bridge.

To get there I had to follow a footpath about three feet wide. On the left mighty walls of stone towered above as high as the eye could reach. On the right was a sheer descent of 300 feet to the Sudberry River, far below.

I had been tramping along the path for an hour or so when I started up a flock of partridge.

Bringing down a couple with my shotgun, I gathered them up and started off to follow them. The reader undoubtedly knows what an evasive bird the partridge is.

Now here, now there, now everywhere, I followed them, and succeeded in bagging four more.

As I suddenly rounded a turn of the cliff called Devil's Bend I slipped and fell toward the edge of the precipice. I knew what a drop like that meant.

I clutched at a sassafras vine, but imagine my horror when it gave way, and I rolled to the edge, swayed a moment or two between life and death and then went twisting, turning and plunging downward toward the river far below me. Every

sense was on the alert, and I involuntarily murmured a prayer for deliverance. Would it come?

Down, down, I went and struck the water feet first and went under. I had barely sense enough to draw a deep breath.

I then lost consciousness.

When I came to I was on the sandy beach of Lake Dennison, and being rolled on an old log by my friend Nick, who had been beneath the cliff and swam out and dragged me ashore.

How thankful I was to be snatched from the jaws of death to a new lease of life. Words cannot describe my joy. Two hours later we caught up with Dick, Frank and Barry (the other three boys), and I was congratulated on my narrow escape.

### Taken for a Target.

(By John Ream, Mich.)

Three years ago, during the beautiful month of October, a party of lads, including myself, were camping at a favorite resort in this State, known as Long Lake. While there I had one experience which I am not likely to forget.

I was in the habit of rising before the others, and catching enough fish for our breakfast. Accordingly, one morning about seven o'clock I rowed to a small cove at the lower end of the lake and began fishing. But the fish were not very anxious to bite at this place, so I decided to go further up the lake, where I expected to have better luck.

However, I was disappointed as two men were fishing at the bend, from a wharf which extended into the lake. I did not suppose they would object if I fished near them, but to make sure, I asked one of the men.

He was very insolent, and in rather strong language informed me that if I did not clear out he would fix me so that I wouldn't bother them.

Starting to row away, I made some remarks that displeased



him, and before I could imagine what he was doing he had drawn a revolver from his pocket.

Pointing it at me, he yelled:

"Take that."

Then he fired.

The bullet whistled close by my head. I was pretty well scared, but managed to duck to the bottom of the boat before he could shoot again.

Thank God, I was a second too quick for him.

The ball passed over the exact spot where I was lying, and chipped a small piece of wood from the top of the boat. I lay perfectly still, until I could get up enough courage to look out, and when I did so what was my joy to see the two men running into a woods near by!

I quickly rowed back to the camp and informed the other fellows of my adventure. They admitted hearing shots, but did not believe my story until I showed them the chip taken from the boat by the bullet. They agreed to help me find the men. We hunted the woods over but no trace could be found of them. They had disappeared. I made up my mind that the man who shot at me was either crazy or drunk, and decided to keep a good watch for him. But he has never turned up. I am still thankful that I escaped injury or perhaps death on that sunny morning in October.

### My Adventure with a Wildcat.

(By Groves Loyd, W. Va.)

It was a spring evening about the middle of April in the year of 1900, while employed by Mr. H.— that I set out to look after some lumber. Not knowing exactly where it was situated, I had to inquire the way, and was misinformed as to the surroundings and, of course was not in a hurry, supposing I would find accommodation in the locality handy to where I was headed for.

Darkness overtaking me when about half-way up a deep ravine which was at least three miles long, I kept on my way, nevertheless reaching the mill between nine and ten o'clock. Caring for my horse, I looked about for my night's lodging, but was unable to find any living soul within three miles of the mill set.

So I started out and walked three miles, and got my supper from a farmer, leaving my rig at the mill, having to return, of course, to look after the horse. So I concluded I would just camp in the ravine.

I set about making ready for my camp. I built a large fire and carried a good supply of wood, made my bunk out of boards, upon which I spread blankets and used the buggy cushion for a pillow, turning my horse loose, knowing that he would not leave me.

I lay down and was soon fast asleep. When all of a sudden I awoke with a start and hearing a steady tramp, tramp, I rubbed my eyes and strained my ears. The tramp, tramp kept getting fainter, when I happened to think of the horse, so knowing it was nothing to get startled at, I lay down again and was soon wrapped in slumber.

I was startled again by a loud pat, pat close to my head. Awakening, I found that it was raining and the drops on the leather cushion had awakened me, so throwing some fresh wood on the fire, I was about to lie down once more when, not twenty-five feet from me, I heard the most unearthly scream that I have ever heard in my life, and so sudden, when everything was so still.

My blood ran cold in my veins. This scream was repeated several times before I could realize what it could be. In a few minutes, however, my senses came back and knowing then that it was a wildcat and of enormous size, I could distinguish the animal in the dim light.

So, seizing a firebrand, I hurled it at him, and he scampered off all the time keeping up a continual screaming.

Well, if I slept any more that night I have no recollection of it.

### Buried in a Cave.

(By Mark Gleason, Mass.)

One Sunday afternoon in September I was in the cave, which we had built, making it larger. The boys had got to-

gether the day before and had dug a large cave and while doing so one of the boys while carrying a huge boulder dropped it right over the cave, thus loosening the roof of the cave.

It would take but little provocation to cause the roof to come down upon the occupants. I was digging and got in quite a distance.

I was smoothing off the roof when I gave the dirt an awful dig and in came the roof. I fell on my back with my left hand holding up the dirt as much as possible, thereby giving me breath.

The boy who was with me had gone out to get a shovel. When he saw the cave-in, he ran with horror to tell my father. My father was struck with horror. He quickly donned his hat and coat and came to my rescue, but he could not do much without a shovel. Meanwhile the boy who was with me had told the neighbors, who quickly grabbed shovels and came to my assistance.

They soon had me dug out, and brought me home. In about two hours I was as well as ever. You may be sure that ever after that I have never entered a cave and never will.

### In a Burning House.

(By John Myers, Pa.)

It was on a summer evening when I was awakened by sounds of bells and voices.

I jumped out of bed to see where the fire was and when I was at the head of the stairs I saw that they were on fire. I could not jump from the window as it was three stories high. I was standing by the window making up my mind to jump when I heard a voice.

I had forgotten all about the skylight and I ran through all the rooms to see where the voice came from.

As I was going through the hall the glass in the skylight broke, and then I heard a voice saying:

"Wait there until I pass you this rope if you don't want to perish."

Well, I finally got up, and I was nearly exhausted, and I would not like to have many experiences like that.

### A Close Shave.

(By Cadet T. Clark, Fla.)

In 1900 I went to Birmingham, Ala., to visit my cousin.

One day it had been raining hard and the ground was muddy. I had to go to town to mail some letters. My cousin lived out of town and I had to go in on the Bessemer and Birmingham Railroad line. I reached town, mailed my letter, and I ran out to catch the train going back. It came around a curve, and I jumped on while it was moving. My foot slipped and I fell between the cracks.

When I slipped I caught hold of the guard with one hand and I held there with all my might. I could feel the wheel scrape my foot.

I was dragged about twenty yards before the train stopped. I have not jumped on a moving train since.

### My Adventure Rabbit Hunting.

(By Willie Haney, Redkey, Md.)

At seven o'clock Thanksgiving morning my friend and I started rabbit hunting. There were a good many rabbits and most of the boys were good shooters. My friend had a double-barrel shotgun, and I had my old rifle, for that was "my old friend," as I called it, as I hardly ever had to shoot at a rabbit the second time.

Well, we started to a woods about two miles from town and we were walking in a cowpath. I stopped and was looking at some men loading corn fodder. My friend had his gun leveled at a rabbit sitting in a brush heap, and when I turned around it frightened the rabbit away and it ran through some broom sage, so we could not get a shot at it.

Our little beagle hound took after him, and soon the rabbit came hopping up, and I shot, breaking its two hind legs. He



crawled about ten feet and I ran and picked him up and broke his neck. I loaded my gun up and we walked about ten yards and came to a fence and started to climb over when my gun went off, tearing a hole in the ground right under my friend's shoe. I could not tell to this day how the gun happened to go off.

We were almost scared to death and more than that we never told the story till about one month afterward, but we still go hunting together.

Do you not think that was a narrow escape from being shot?

### My Experience with Ghosts and Water.

(By Fred Bybee, Ind.)

One night my chum (Earl Mills) and I took our skates and lanterns and went to Wilson's pond.

One side of the pond is unsafe and the other side is all right. We hung up our lanterns and were skating when our lanterns went out, and two white figures came from the graveyard toward us.

We were too scared to run, and waited till they got within about two rods of us and then we skated as fast as we could skate over to the unsafe side.

We both went under.

When we came to four boys were standing by us. They said they went to the graveyard and dressed two of them in white sheets and the others came and blew our lanterns out. They said that it was all they could do to get us back to life.

### A Texan Tale.

(By Mose Elder, Texas.)

When I was about twelve years old my father moved to West Texas, where he started to raising cattle.

When we had been there for about two years I began to think I was large enough to be a cowboy, and this is the way it ended.

My father wanted to ship some cattle and had to drive another bunch of about a hundred thoroughbreds to a ranch.

When we started with the cattle we were going to ship, the hired men told me that if we had a stampede among the cattle my father would lose about one-third of his cattle. When we had traveled about twenty miles the sun was nearly down, and we thought it best to camp where we were.

The first thing we did was to get the cattle in a bunch, and then we cooked and ate supper. After supper we were sitting around the fire talking when the cattle suddenly got scared at something.

All of them started toward home at once, with the cowboys after them.

As soon as I could get my horse saddled and bridled, I started on the trail. The first thing I knew I was flying over the horse's head.

When I came to I was at home in my bed. They told me that I had been senseless for about three days.

### Shot by a Cannon.

(By Tom Coder, Mo.)

It was one Sunday about three years ago that I and my chum, Sam Haight, wanted to go to the store, and my mother said I could go, but not to go any place else. We went over to a candy store and bought some candy and things and then went home.

It was the Sunday before the Fourth of July, and Sam said he had a cannon made for the Fourth, and he had some powder, so we went up to his house to try it.

We shot it off two or three times when our fuse ran out, so we went to work and rolled some strings in powder, and then loaded it with powder and paper wads, and last put in a stick four or five inches long and then lit the fuse. I was standing at the left side when it went off, but it went off with such force that it whirled partly round, and it struck me. I was barefooted, and when it went off the stick broke.

One part hit me just above the ankle on the right foot, and the other part on the left. It hit me in the instep.

My foot was badly burned, and my whole left leg from my knee down was full of powder. My brother carried me home, and it was so hot that the doctor was afraid it would turn to blood poison, but I was kept in a cool room till I got so I could walk around the house on crutches.

I am well now, but my left leg has a small hole in it yet, where the stick hit me. I haven't wanted to experiment with any more cannons since then.

### Nearly Lynched.

(By Walter Davis, Iowa.)

I was staying at my sister's out in the country. We had just got through our dinner when my brother-in-law picked up a rope and tied a hangman's knot in it and told me to put the noose over my head.

I put it over my head and then he threw the other end over a rafter, for there was no ceiling in the house.

Then he told me to get up and stand on the edge of the bed; then he told me to jump off.

He was holding the other end in his hand. He didn't think I would jump. He didn't have time to tell me not to jump before I leaped through the air, when he saw me jump he let go of the rope, and I lit on the floor, but did not hurt myself.

My neck was all scratched, but that was all. I was just five years old then.

Wasn't I near death?

You bet you were, Walt.

### A Ferryboat Accident.

(By M. Gilmour, Ont.)

The Red River is very wide and swift where it forms the State line between Pembina, N. D., and St. Vincent, Minn. A large ferryboat, operated by means of a wire cable, handles freight and passengers between the two towns.

Joe Mahoney, Tom O'Brien, Pat Mahoney, George Garland and I were crossing over to the Minnesota shore one September night, and as we stepped aboard the ferry a buggy containing a man, woman and two children drove onto the boat.

The horse was very wild, and the driver was unable to manage it. We had reached the middle of the river when the horse became very much frightened and without warning backed the buggy over the end of the boat into the water.

The woman began to scream, but two of my chums seized the horse by the head while I assisted my other two companions in pulling the woman and children out of the floating buggy. The horse was unhitched and the buggy towed behind till the shore was reached, where we assisted the man in harnessing up. He was profuse in his thanks and said he was lucky to get off as well as he did.

### Heroes in Buckskin.

(By Frank A. Booth.)

Early in the Wild West days,  
When men in buckskin were making fame,  
Two of these men in particular—

I will gladly mention their names:

Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack—

What remembrance those names bring back—

Did the work that did not fail

To drive Injun and outlaw off the trail.

Now those men are resting from labors,

And enjoy the glories they have gained forthwith;

While their deeds are being recorded

By the excellent firm of Street & Smith.

Your verses are first-rate, Frank.



# BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout; No. 14—Buckskin Sam; No. 15—Seneca Adams ("Old Grizzly" Adams); No. 16—Pony Bob (Bob Haslam); No. 17—Major John M. Burke (Arizona Jack); No. 18—Kit Carson, Jr.; No. 19—Charles Emmett (Dashing Charlie); No. 20—Alf Slade; No. 21—Arizona Charlie (Charlie Meadows); No. 22—Yellow Hair, the White Boy Chief (William Burgess); No. 23—Broncho Billy (William Powell).

## No. 24—SQUAW-MAN JACK.

(JOHN NELSON.)

It may be well to first explain the meaning of the word "squaw-man," a name originating in the fertile brain of some expert in nomenclature, as most men of the frontier are, for it is a habit on the plains to at once nickname an individual who appears there.

Whether the custom originated in the fact that some men who went West for their country's good, as well as their own, were anxious not to be known by their own name, for reasons, was the real cause or not, is not known; but certain it is that for good or bad causes, few men were allowed to retain the names of their boyhood.

The Indians named a child or a paleface stranger in their midst from some peculiar happening at the time of its birth or about it, as, for instance, Chief Crazy Horse was wont to ride a mad mustang and was so named.

The term squaw-man was given by the Indians, not as a reproach, but to all those white men, honest or otherwise, who married a squaw of their tribe, and thus identified themselves with their people.

So it was that John Nelson got the name of "Squaw-man Jack," and became a white chief among the Sioux.

John Nelson was a Virginian by birth, and came of a good family in that State.

He received a good education, studied medicine, and when just entering upon the practice of his profession the Civil War broke out, and he entered the Confederate army, at first as a surgeon, but later, through his personal popularity, was elected lieutenant of his company, and at the close of the strife was a captain of cavalry.

His parents having died during the war, his home in ruins, and no close ties to bind him longer to Virginia, John Nelson, with his horse and weapons, his outfit and a little money in his pocket as the total of his wealth, started overland for the great West.

It was a year before he reached the mining country; his destination, and while going along a trail alone he came upon a stage held up by two road-agents and the passengers being robbed.

Well used to fighting, he only saw that the driver of the coach was wounded and held under the revolver of one of the men, while the other was doing the robbing.

Instantly he spurred forward, shot the man dead at the head of the team and a hot duel was fought between the other one and himself.

Though his horse was killed, John Nelson's aim brought down the second road-agent, and thus won the fight.

"Pard, are you much hurt?" he asked the driver.

"Bullet broke my arm, that's all; but you saved us.

"They also kilt one of my leaders."

"All right, I'll drive you in, and as they were mounted I'll look up their horses and hitch 'em up in place of your dead animal."

"You is a trump, pard, and I thank you."

"As I do also, for you saved us—I am inspector of the stage line on this run, and if you think you can drive six horses over this rough trail I will be glad if you will, for I have a bone

felon on my finger," and the speaker, a man seated beside the driver, showed that his right hand was in a sling.

"Oh, I can drive easy enough, as I had often put four-in-hands through as bad trails in the Virginia mountains."

"You shall be well rewarded, sir, and if you need a job, we want a good driver over our line, and you can get it."

"It's what I do want, for a surety is a good thing. But our driver, pard, needs looking after, so I'll lose no time."

He soon found the horses of the road-agents. One was hitched in the place of the dead leader, the half dozen passengers had put the dead bodies in the stage coach, and John Nelson said:

"How far do we have to go?"

"Fifteen miles to the next relay station, and twenty further to the fort."

"And that is the nearest place where you can get help, so I will look to your wounds myself."

He took from his saddle bags a small case of instruments, lint and other necessary articles, got water from a brook near by and at once took the wounded driver in hand, extracting the bullet, taking out a small piece of shattered bone and then skillfully dressing the wound.

"Guess you must be an army surgeon, sir," said the stage boss.

"I was a surgeon in the Confederate army, so know bad wounds. But this one will turn out all right," was the reply.

Aiding the driver to the box, to show him the trail, he fastened the other outlaw's horse in lead, and took hold of the reins in a way that at once relieved all anxiety as to whether he was a good driver or not.

He put the team at a good pace and reached the relay station but little behind time, reaching the fort on time.

"Done bang-up, an' you'll be a good man on the line," said the driver.

True to his word, the stage boss took John Nelson back with him to headquarters, bought from him the two outlaw's horses, which he said belonged to him, and gave him the wounded driver's run until he should get well.

The company also gave him a gold medal and a thousand dollars, for his courage had saved a great deal of money for the line, so John Nelson thought that he had begun well.

For a couple of years he remained a stage driver, on different runs of the trail, and time and again he added to his record as a "man who would not be held up," and was called by his comrades "Sure Death" to road-agents.

On one occasion when driving over the trail he was warned by a young Indian girl who waited on her pony for the coming of the coach, to tell him that a band of outlaws were at a certain point ahead to hold him up.

He did not know why a Sioux girl had warned him, as she was a hostile; but he drove back a few miles, took another trail and flanked the danger.

Two months later he came to the top of a ridge in the trail, and saw coming rapidly across the plain half-a-dozen Indians.

He always had his field glass with him, and it showed that



two of the Indians were captives, a woman and a man, that the other four were a Cheyenne chief and three braves.

Quickly he unbuckled one of his leaders, sprang upon him barebacked, and waited in ambush, his stage rifle, a repeater, ready for work.

The Indians came dashing right up the trail, and aiming at the chief, he fired, dropping him from his saddle.

But another, whether by accident or design, shot the captive brave, and fearing that he might kill the girl also, John Nelson fired upon him.

Then he charged out upon the other two Cheyennes, killing one and the horse of the other, who, on foot darted to cover and escaped.

To the surprise of John Nelson, the Indian girl was the same one who had warned him of the road-agents some time before.

She was good-looking, well dressed in Indian costume, and the daughter of the great Sioux chief, Red Cloud.

She was overjoyed at his rescue, said that she and her brother had been hunting near their village, when Fighting Elk, the Cheyenne chief, had surprised them with his five braves and made them prisoners.

Her brother had killed one Cheyenne brave, but then they had been taken.

She was most thankful to John Nelson, and said, earnestly: "Lulutah not forget great white driver of wheel tepee," meaning the coach.

John Nelson tied the body of her brother upon his horse, gave her the ponies of the slain Cheyennes and the war bonnet of Fighting Elk, and taking the scalps of the braves, he had killed, she mounted her horse and rode back toward her village.

The coach had no passengers, and Nelson sent the horses rapidly along after his adventure on the ridge, pondering over the strange life he was leading.

Months after he had a race for life in his coach down a mountain trail, and over a plain, pursued by half a hundred Sioux warriors.

He had five miners as passengers, and with them he kept up a running fight, emptying a number of saddles. But he saw that they would be taken, and as three of the miners had been killed he called to the others to be ready to jump out when he halted, cut loose the horses and thus escape.

They did their best, but only John Nelson and one miner got away—the other being killed.

Nelson's horse was wounded, and soon after the miner was shot from his saddle.

Then Nelson was wounded and his horse fell.

He still made a plucky fight, until a brave called out to the others not to kill him, and he was spared.

He saw his coach set on fire, the miners scalped, and twice badly wounded, he was carried a prisoner, suffering terribly, to the Sioux village.

There he was at once recognized by Lulutah, the head chief's daughter, and his life was spared.

For months he lay hovering between life and death, and then got well, when he was claimed by Lulutah to be her husband, and being most grateful to the Indian girl he was married to her by the full Sioux rites.

It was through his influence later that peace was made between the whites and his adopted tribe, and much attached to his Sioux wife and their little boy, he did all in his power for the betterment of the tribe, and to keep peace with the whites.

Having met the man, and knowing his remarkable career, Buffalo Bill sought him out and influenced him, with his Indian wife and two children, to become members of the Wild West Show, and for years they traveled with him as a "star attraction," going all over the United States and Europe, while to-day, in his pleasant cabin home in the Sioux country, an old man, John Nelson lives with his squaw wife and their children, a contented and loving family.

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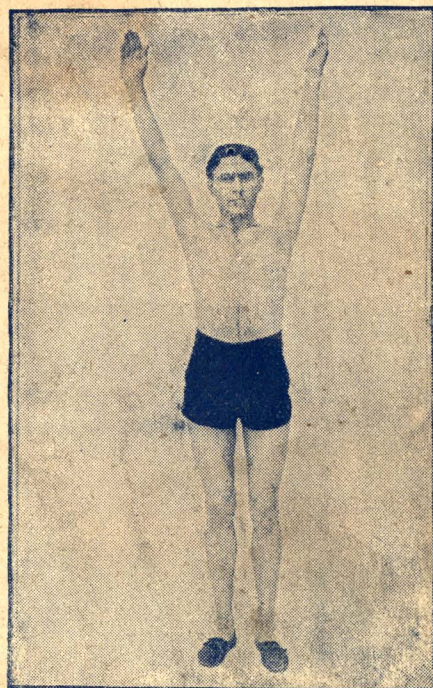
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